

Mîyo Pikiskwatitowin (Speaking to Each Other in a Good Way):
The Significance of Culture Brokers in Cross-Cultural Collaboration with Aboriginal
Peoples

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family, Elder Mary Lee, Knowledge Keeper Delvin Kanewiyakiho, and in memory of Elder Simon Kitwayhat.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the contribution of culture brokers in bridging dialogue between, on the one hand, Aboriginal Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and on the other, non-Aboriginal writers, publishers, teachers, and consultants in the development of the Pearson Saskatchewan Science textbook resources. This thesis employs a multiple qualitative methods approach that observes the critical elements of Indigenous research methodologies, and is interpreted and presented through the metaphor of learning to drum and sing. Much of the cultural work for this study relied on the wisdom of *Nehiyaw* (Cree) Elder Mary Lee and Knowledge Keeper Delvin Kanewiyakiho. Insights are drawn from the narratives of four participants, two Aboriginal and two non-Aboriginal, who were instrumental in the Pearson Saskatchewan Science textbook collaboration (PSSC). The results suggested that (1) a greater understanding of local ways of knowing, culture, and protocol are needed; (2) *oskâpêwisak* (Elders' helpers) often played a significant role as local culture brokers during the PSSC; (3) reflexivity is a vital trait that culture brokers need in order to really grasp the local context and cultural protocols; and (4) reflexivity creates a condition whereby culture brokers are open to the development of the ability for two-eyed seeing.

Key words: culture broker, Aboriginal, Elder, science, Aboriginal knowledge, Indigenous research methods, border crossing, *oskâpêwis*, reflexivity, two-eyed seeing, science curriculum development.

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PROLOGUE

This study is about the important contribution that culture brokers made to a significant Saskatchewan collaboration in science education. This partnership, called the Pearson Saskatchewan Science Collaboration (PSSC), involved many Aboriginal¹ and non-Aboriginal people. Although I have been a part of other projects to Indigenize curricula and resources, none has been as successful. This led me to intuit that the PSSC's success relied on several key people who acted as culture brokers by interpreting and translating incongruent worldviews of various peoples involved in PSSC so that effective dialogue could happen. Many of these culture brokers were people with an understanding of Aboriginal ways of knowing, and are well known as cultural helpers or Elders' helper in their respective communities.

Along this journey of discovery, I also came to understand how my life as a visible minority and a cultural outsider allowed me to grasp the ways in which culture brokers are able to bridge cultures. My relationships to Elders and Knowledge Keepers over the past ten years have also provided me with a necessary background work for research with Indigenous people. Accordingly, before I explore the role of culture brokers in intercultural dialogue, I share my personal stories to provide a context for this research and to describe my connections to the Aboriginal community, which positioned me to be a part of that collaboration.

I was born in Vietnam but I am descended from the Chaozhou people in Southern China. I consider myself Chinese since I spoke mainly Chinese growing up. I come from a family of Vietnamese-Chinese refugees, who escaped communist persecution in 1979. We were sponsored

¹ The term 'Aboriginal' as it is used in this study employs the Canadian constitutional and legal definition. According to Aboriginal Affairs and North Development (AAND, 2012) the term Aboriginal people refers to First Nations, Metis and Inuit.

to Canada in 1980 after a year in a Malaysian refugee camp. After the Canadian government relocated our family, we lived in rural Saskatchewan.

As we adopted Canadian identities, we were both insiders and outsiders. With citizenship, we became insiders and could access education and opportunities. My parents struggled to clothe, to feed us, and to earn extra to pay for cultural lessons and sports. To complete our transformation my dad changed our family name from “Eu” (尤 in Chinese) or “Vuu” (in the Vietnamese) to the anglicized version “View”. He also gave us English names so that we would fit in. But as outsiders, we also experienced racism and exclusion. As a child I was often taunted and beaten up at school because of my ethnicity. I quickly learned to navigate the conflict of cultural values between home and school; for example, looking into the eyes of the authority figure at school but averting the eyes when I was in trouble at home. Other instances of cultural contradiction seemed indiscriminate to me, which made the work of negotiating values far more confusing.

During my formative years, ignorance and prejudice of the wider community formed my beliefs about First Nations people. By university, little of that changed. It was only in my position as an interpreter for Parks Canada that I learned about the decimation of First Nations peoples through disease, mistreatment in residential schools, and their privation and starvation due to the loss of the sacred “buffalo” (Elders’ traditional referent for “bison”). I learned about the questionable practices and legislation the Crown imposed on First Nations after the treaties were signed. But for me, this book learning had little connection to reality until I began teaching in Saskatoon eight years later.

My true education into the *Nehiyaw* (Plains Cree people) world began in 2004, at *Oskayak*, a First Nations High School in Saskatoon, previously known as Joe Duquette. There I

witnessed first-hand the harmful consequences that oppressive colonial policy had wrought on the Aboriginal people. The first two months were very difficult. I grew frustrated with the rate of student attrition, the poor attendance, and low academic performance, but I had not connected those issues to wider social implications such as poverty, racism, residual effects of residential school, and colonization. None of it connected until I had an incident involving a student and the teacher librarian.

In late September 2004, Norma, the teacher-librarian, approached me after she witnessed me admonish an Aboriginal student about the necessity of homework. When the student left, the teacher-librarian asked a simple question: “Where do you think he’ll do this homework?” As she told me his story, I realized how naïve I was. I had taken for granted that everyone has some place they called home where they do *homework*. Norma explained that the student lived on his own, fended for himself, and when he could not find a place in a local shelter he slept outside. My heart sank. This experience challenged many basic assumptions about Canadian society and the role of education. This experience led me to learn heart breaking stories of many *Oskayak* students; some who paid an awful price to leave the gang life; others who were so enmeshed in that life they saw no way out; and still others who struggled with addiction and the effects of abuse. Head and heart finally connected.

So for the next few years I accepted any opportunity to learn the history, the cultural values, the epistemologies, and the stories of the community. The school’s Elders, Simon Kitwayhat who I call *Mosom* (grandpa) and Mary Lee, as well as many of the staff members became my teachers. Elder Mary Lee who is like a grandmother to me taught me about being human, the nature of plants, the values of patience, and teepee teachings. She gently corrected me on the proper usage of protocols. I participated in Sweat Lodge ceremonies, participated in

Smudges, Powwows, Round Dances, cultural camps, and Feasts. Through ceremony I was given insights into the *Nehiyaw* worldview and through those experiences I came to know Mother Earth and how to pray to Creator in my own way. I grew in understanding of protocol and ceremony.

Nevertheless, I acknowledge one who deserves special acknowledgement. I call him brother. He is a cherished friend and my teacher. This man is Delvin Kanewiyakiho, a Knowledge Keeper from Little Pine Reserve. He took me under his wing, and over many meals that we shared, I learned about his culture through many of his personal stories. He took me out to Sweats and taught me about ceremony. He mentored me as a helper for Feasts and Smudges. However, his best gift to me was to teach me to sing like the *Nehiyawak*.

Finding my Voice

The story of how I learned to sing is also an important part of this study; it is how I have come to understand Indigenous research methodology. Although both Delvin and Mosom Simon taught me to sing, it was Delvin who mentored me. And while he led our school's drumming circle, it was the students who invited me into this world. At first I was unsure of what to expect, but I went. I felt so insecure and so alien. I stood at the door, but the young men insisted that I move from the doorway to an empty chair by the drum. One young man nodded, and handed me a drumstick. Then they motioned for me to follow along. I drummed quietly and timidly. By the end of an hour my forearm ached, but I saw approval in their smiles. Day after day, the young men invited me back. Day after day, I accepted their invitation.

Over the course of the next two years I learned to sing, and I received priceless teachings from Delvin and the drumming circle. I came to know and to revere the drum as the heartbeat of Mother Earth, and to acknowledge Grandfather Drum with tobacco. I was shown how to smudge

my throat because the song that originates from there is a prayer. I learned the necessary protocols to give thanks to the animal who gave its life to make the drum. The drummers taught me that each round signifies the four directions. I learned the structure of each song, for which each singer takes the lead but afterward all voices join together. In time I had found my voice.

Singing became a part of our school life. We sang at school circles, Round Dances, and Powwows. Our staff started the day with a song. After school every day, our drum group met, and we sang until our voices were worn. When *Mosom* Simon learned that I sang, he showed me a great kindness. It was customary for *Mosom* to sing after every circle and every ceremony. However, on one occasion after a school smudge instead of singing himself, he handed me his drum and asked me to sing. I was deeply moved.

When the day came to leave *Oskayak*, although they had already given me so much, the community gave me a gift beyond measure. Lovingly and carefully Elder Mary Lee had made me a hand drum. It was carefully stitched, and bound together. Even the head of the drumstick was carefully made. It must have taken her weeks to make. Then, *Mosom* Simon Smudged it at a school circle. He told me to use the drum and the songs to teach other people about the Nehiyaw culture. Their gift, cherished teachings, and cultural experiences would greatly influence my future work as a teacher. Elder Mary Lee, Delvin, and *Mosom* still guide me. At *Oskayak* I was accepted as member of the community; that acceptance was the gift of reciprocity rooted in cultural beliefs of generosity. This acceptance fulfills a circle in which I started my life in Canada as an immigrant outsider, then an assimilated new Canadian, and later from naïve teacher to a kindred spirit.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In 2007, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education in collaboration with Pearson Canada initiated a project to design textbooks that genuinely included Aboriginal content, perspectives, and ways of knowing. This collaboration included teachers, writers, ministry personnel, Knowledge Keepers and Elders. Because the inclusion of Aboriginal content into an education resource was new to many of the team's personnel, I saw our group of non-Aboriginal people, attempting a culture crossing, some of us with little understanding of Aboriginal ways of knowing, and succeeding on account of many people who acted as "culture brokers". Culture brokers are people who adeptly bridge two disparate cultures and can help others successfully cross from one culture into another.

Some culture brokers were ordinary people with ties to Aboriginal communities; others were known in their communities as Knowledge Keepers and Elders. These latter individuals are steeped in ceremony and protocols, ways of handling and respecting sacred knowledge (Ermine, Sinclair, & Jeffrey, 2004). Thus, they could impart their significance to non-Aboriginal members of the team. Protocols establish a mutual trust and respect, which dictate the degree to which different kinds of cultural and sacred knowledge can be shared. As a result, they were able to establish a climate of cultural sensitivity and awareness around protocols, connect non-Aboriginal people to Aboriginal ways of knowing, and foster a space for strong collaboration to occur. I sensed that this collaboration was highly effective because of their involvement.

In this study I explore the role and contributions of these people. My aim is to describe some of their characteristics, dispositions, attributes, and skills. This work contributes to a growing body of knowledge that educational entities may utilize to develop, identify, and foster

the development of those qualities in future teachers and leaders. By cultivating these traits in, educators are able to facilitate cultural crossings for families into the culture of schools and appropriately fashion culturally responsive environments, curricula, and teaching resources that reflect, respects, and honours the diversity of cultures in Canada, especially Aboriginal cultures.

Context of the Pearson Saskatchewan Science Collaboration

In recent decades, Saskatchewan's ministry of learning has worked with Aboriginal communities to develop curricula that better reflected the Aboriginal ways of knowing. The historical context that led up to these policy changes is discussed in detail in chapter two. However, in this section I provide the context for the Pearson Saskatchewan Science Collaboration (PSSC). The description of this collaboration is necessary to provide the context for this study and for my interviews with four key participants in the PSSC.

The collaboration began in 2007. The Ministry of Education and the publisher, Pearson Canada, co-financed a series of science textbooks which featured Aboriginal content and perspectives. Our team included experienced Aboriginal consultants, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, teachers, writers, editors, publisher representatives, the curriculum writer, and Aboriginal Unit Ministry superintendents. Our initial discussions, along with guidance of several Elders and Knowledge Keepers led to the formation of an Elder advisory group, consisting of *Nehiyaw* (Plains Cree), *Métis*, *Dakota*, *Dëne*, *Nakawē* (Saulteaux) Elders and Knowledge Keepers. As the project unfolded, our team decided there should be a balance of Aboriginal perspectives in genders, language group, and regional representation. I was involved with the PSSC since the beginning and I took on various roles such as writer, cultural liaison, researcher, facilitator, and reviewer.

This project consisted of several textbooks that would be written by grade for the general student body. Throughout each book, Aboriginal content, Elders' teaching and ways of knowing were included to complement the Western science knowledge where applicable. Photos depicted Aboriginal people in both modern and traditional contexts so that Aboriginal children could see themselves and their cultures represented in both contemporary and historical contexts. Each unit of each book contained one Aboriginal feature or profile called "Ask an Elder" and "Ask a Knowledge Keeper", which would focus on a cultural teaching that related to theme of a particular science unit.

To write the feature "Ask an Elder", I visited different Elders across the province. Initially, Ministry Superintendent Brenda Green provided Elders' names and contacts for these features. Later in the process Elders would recommend other Elders. Since this kind of work is very relational I would drive to the Elders' home community or we would meet in person at an agreed location. Our conversations were always preceded by the offering of tobacco and cloth. The Elders' profiles were written after extensive visits with each Elder. Elders were also given honoraria for their time and for each profile. Elders gave teachings that paralleled science themes presented in each book. When I wrote a profile, I used the Elders' exact words when I could. Each profile was written from their perspective; I was careful not to mix or compare Eurocentric and Aboriginal epistemologies. After I wrote each profile, I met with the Elder or Knowledge Keeper again to review the profile with them. Lastly, each profiled Elder was invited to an Elders' gathering to critique the manuscript of each book.

Over the course of seven books, topics ranged from childhood experiences of nature, to four direction teachings, to birch syrup making, and much more. In total, *Pearson Saskatchewan Science* textbooks from grades three to nine included 28 Elders and Knowledge Keepers in the

“Ask an Elder” profiles. Collectively the textbooks represented all five language groups in Saskatchewan.

The profiles of Dëne Elders in particular were the most challenging. Many of the *Dëne* Elders involved in PSSC spoke little or no English. Thus most of this work was done through Jeanne Auramenko, a *Dëne* Knowledge Keeper, who acted as our culture broker. She became an invaluable part of this work. Jeanne interviewed *Dëne* Elders from various northern communities like Clear Water *Dëne* Nation for several “Ask an Elder” profiles. She and I discussed the questions that related to the content of the “Ask an Elder” profiles and then she would drive eighteen hours north to conduct these interviews. Upon her return, she provided me with notes and transcripts that I used to write the profiles. With the finished profile in hand she would go back up north to see each Elder again to review the profiles with them. Jeanne must be acknowledged for this tremendous work; she too is a full-time teacher and had no release time from her regular duties.

At least two Elder Advisory gatherings were scheduled for each book, one to initiate each project and a second to review final drafts and to make recommendations and changes. Elder Advisory gatherings often consisted of a dozen to 18 Elders and Knowledge Keepers. These participants were presented with Tobacco and honoraria. Their lodging, expenses, and meals were provided. Meetings occurred over two days. Two weeks prior to each meeting, Elders were presented with a textbook manuscript, given tobacco, and allowed time to consider the contents.

These initial meetings were crucial. They established norms for the dialogue. These meetings permitted Elders and Knowledge Keepers to get a sense of the overall project. Elders imparted and described their cultural, epistemological, and pedagogical position. At these gatherings Elders had the opportunity to agree on some common protocols around how to share

their teachings with the team. These meetings permitted parties to ask questions. Over time as our collaborating group grew accustomed to the textbook development process, there was less need for an initial advisory meeting. By the fifth book, the initial advisory meeting became a second Elder's advisory meeting for reviewing final drafts.

Each meeting began with a Smudge, prayer, and song. A different Elder was offered tobacco to say the opening, noon-meal, or closing prayer. Delvin Kanewiyakiho often preformed the role of *oskâpêwis* for the Smudge. After everyone Smudged, Delvin and I would sing. The formal part of the meeting began with a talking circle. Sessions were interrupted with many breaks to give Elders some time to rest. Throughout the meeting Elders and Knowledge Keepers provided feedback on the Aboriginal perspectives and content in a particular unit of a given book although they were free to comment on all other unrelated areas of the manuscript.

After six years, the PSSC produced textbooks from grades three through nine. By this time, our collaboration ended. During one of our last meetings Elder Judy Bear shared a story that sums up our reasons for making these books. She said her grandson came home one day after school and was elated. He produced a textbook, flipped to Judy's profile, and beamed because his *kookom* (grandma) Judy was featured in a science textbook. His friends could hardly believe it! A young First Nations boy saw himself and his culture reflected in a book he would not normally expect to see.

Purpose Statement

This study on the nature, role, traits, dispositions, and contribution of culture brokers is grounded in my personal experiences with Aboriginal people in the context of the *Pearson Saskatchewan Science* resource project. Specifically, this study seeks to understand how culture brokers are able to bridge the culture between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in an

educational collaboration. Although this study focuses specifically on a local example, the insights gained from this study may be applicable to broader contexts of cultural brokerage where conditions of diversity exist. Results of this study, for example, may be used by school divisions and other education bodies, such as universities, to develop, identify, and foster skills, attributes, and dispositions in pre-service teachers, tenured teachers, and future leaders.

Ultimately, the development of these staff members impact the school culture, shaping an ethos that embraces diversity and possibly establishing culturally sensitive programming for diverse other peoples.

Research Questions and Study Delimitations

This study employs a multiple qualitative conceptual framework based on Indigenous methodologies and interpreted that framework through the metaphor of learning to drum and to sing. Within the conceptual framework I use qualitative tools strictly as tools of analysis to explore the perspectives of four participants who were involved in PSSC. The questions from this study are meant to guide a semi-structured interview with participants to explore their views around the notions of culture brokers in the context of PSSC. To best represent views from both sides of dialoguing groups represented in the PSSC, I have chosen two Aboriginal participants and two non-Aboriginal participants.

These four participants were chosen for several reasons. First, all participants were involved in this study have extensive expertise related to pedagogy. Moreover, Aboriginal participants chosen for this study are well regarded as cultural resource people in their communities and in wider Aboriginal communities. The non-Aboriginal participants have had a broad base of experiences working with members of the Aboriginal community and with Indigenous culture in the fields of science research, pedagogy, curriculum development, and

cultural brokerage. Lastly, all of these participants were involved in the PSSC since its inception. I employed a mix of questions to guide my work and questions for my interview.

My study questions are:

1. One possible understanding of the term “culture broker” is: an individual, who is grounded in a particular culture, and can help other people from another culture make a crossing from their respective culture into the culture of the culture broker. How do you describe, or understand the notion of culture broker?
2. During the Pearson Saskatchewan Science Collaboration did you consider yourself a culture broker? If so, in what way did you consider yourself a culture broker in that context? If not, then could you identify which people undertook the role of culture broker during the Pearson Saskatchewan Science Collaboration?
3. What are qualities made these individuals good culture brokers?
4. How did these individuals as culture brokers promote positive and ethical intercultural dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people during the PSSC?
5. What dispositions, orientations, callings, and motivations do these individuals have that compel them to become culture brokers?
6. Describe some constraints or barriers encountered that prevented cultural brokerage from happening during the PSSC.
7. How did involvement in the PSSC process lead to greater cross-cultural openness for yourself or for others?
8. What contributions did culture brokers make to the content of the textbooks? to our dialogues?

9. How does traditional protocol change the nature of cultural brokerage when it comes to dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people? Do you see a place for the *oskâpêwisak* as culture broker in these instances?
10. How might universities and school divisions train or identify pre-service teachers who have the qualities necessary to be good culture brokers for all students but in particular, Aboriginal students?

Description of the Study

This study follows and honours Indigenous models of research as the basis for its conceptual framework, drawing upon elements from the work of Nehiyaw scholars Kovach (2009), Fiddler (2014), Makosis (2008), and Wilson (2008). This research is interpreted through my own experience learning to drum and sing with the *Oskayak High School* drumming circle and respects Aboriginal approaches to research. The study is described in four stages of research but is understood and is interpreted through the drumming metaphor: (1) gathering to drum: preparing to research; (2) learning to drum and sing: gathering knowledge; (3) interpreting songs: making meaning; and (4) singing as serving the community: giving back.

Since I am neither *Nehiyaw* nor claim any expertise in the *Nehiyaw* worldview I have sought the direction of people with whom I have a relationship. I am guided by a *Nehiyaw* Elder, Mary Lee, and Knowledge Keeper, Delvin Kanewiyakiho, during the entirety of this thesis from researcher preparation, including the necessary ceremonies and protocols, to the collection and interpretation of data, to the final stages of presentation, and writing of research findings. In stage three, my approach to analysis and data presentation follows Kovach's (2009) approach, in which qualitative methods are used only as tools of analysis and data presentation.

Definitions

In this section I identify several key terms used throughout this thesis. These terms are explained in the context of this research since they hold different meanings for different people.

In this thesis “First Nation” is used in lieu of the term “Indian” or “Native”, which can be offensive for many people (AAND, 2012), depending on the context. For the purposes of this thesis the usage of the term First Nation will refer to the *Nakawē*, *Nehiyaw*, *Dëne*, *Dakota*, *Lakota*, and *Nakota* peoples of Saskatchewan. This term acknowledges an explicit understanding of their legal, constitutional, and treaty rights as the first peoples of this land.

The word “Indigenous” is used to refer to all distinctive cultural groups who are the original descendants of a particular place, and thus distinguishes this term from the term “Aboriginal”, which is used exclusively to refer First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples of Canada. The term “Indigenous” includes “a cultural group’s ways of perceiving reality, ways of knowing and value systems” (Chilisa, 2012, p. 13) and has come to be associated with the experiences of colonization that many oppressed peoples face (Chilisa, 2012).

A similar understanding is found in the document *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*. According to Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions [APF] and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR] (2013), an understanding of “Indigenous” includes: (1) a local peoples’ historical continuity with the land prior to their colonization from outside forces; (2) self-determining and considered distinct from the dominant society; (3) the local people’s attempts to exist as a people; and (4) attempts to preserve and to pass on their ancestral territories and their unique cultural identity for future generations. This study will also draw on Chilisa (2012) and the OHCHR’s (2013) definitions for its understanding of “Indigenous”.

In this thesis, the word “science” strictly connotes a Eurocentric or Western understanding of the ways, laws and theories that describe the working of the natural world through empirical means. Although I appreciate how authors like Aikenhead and Michell (2011) or Cajete (2000) have reclaimed and broadened the word “science” to include other ways of knowing, I contend that for many readers, the term “science” still invokes an image and understanding of Eurocentric science. As a result, any treatment of Aboriginal or Indigenous value systems or epistemologies or “ways of perceiving reality” (Chilisa, 2012, p. 13) will use the term “Aboriginal Knowledge” (AK) (Aikenhead, 2000; Battiste, 1998)

In this study I will use the phrase “Aboriginal Knowledge” (AK) to describe the ways in which First Nations, Métis and Inuit people understand, live in, and experience the natural world, in past and present contexts, and continue to transmit this knowledge system through oral tradition. Other authors have used terms to denote a similar meaning: Indigenous Knowledge (Battiste, 2005; Hart, 2010; Michie, 2003; Redwing- Saunders, 2007), Traditional Ecological knowledge (Berkes, Colding & Folke, 2000; Huntington, 2000), Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (Usher, 2000), Aboriginal Science (Aikenhead, 2001; Aikenhead & Huntley, 1999), Traditional Knowledge (Berkes & Henley, 1997) or (6) Native Science (Cajete, 2000). Many of these terms denote worldviews that are transmitted through oral knowledge, transmitted through relationships, and have strong cultural and spiritual elements (Augustine, 1997; Cajete, 2000; Kapyrka & Dockstator 2012).

Although this is a broad description, it does not suggest that a pan-Aboriginal homogeneity exists; quite the opposite. Some researchers such as Battiste and Henderson (2000) maintain that a single definition of Aboriginal or Indigenous knowledge cannot encapsulate the ways of being and knowing of all Indigenous cultures, and the act of which would be the

imposition of kind of “cognitive imperialism”; they suggest that researchers seek understanding about rather than define the nature of Aboriginal or Indigenous knowledge. I acknowledge this argument and recognize the distinctiveness of knowledges and cultures of Inuit, First Nations, and Metis people. I use the term Aboriginal knowledges not to generalize them but to collectively refer to Canadian Indigenous people and their knowledge systems.

The terms Eurocentric, Eurocentrism, and Western will be treated as interchangeable in this thesis. According to Battiste and Henderson (2000), Eurocentrism is a "dominant intellectual and educational movement that postulates the superiority of Europeans over non- Europeans... it has been the dominant artificial context for the last five centuries and is an integral part of all scholarship, opinion, and law" (p. 58). In short, I use the term Eurocentric to describe a very broad collection of worldviews and values that originate from several European Nations and cultures, particularly the British, French, and Spanish, from which nations like Canada have adopted their forms of governments, cultural practices, language, religions, and values.

In the context of this research study, I originally felt that an understanding of intercultural dialogue (ID) was needed to describe the exchange of ideas, understanding, epistemologies, and meaning between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people during the Elders’ gathering for the PSSC. At first I felt that it was necessary to think of dialogue as intercultural since I am from a Vietnamese\Chinese background and I am engaged in research with Indigenous people. Also the dialogue that took place during the PSSC occurred between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. However a search of the literature revealed that intercultural dialogue was a ubiquitous term, adopted and advanced mainly by Eurocentric bodies and understood mainly in political contexts and movements (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006; Barrett, 2008; Cantle, 2012; Council of Europe [CoE] , 2007; European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research [ERICarts], 2008;

Irani & Douri, 2009; Jackson, 2014; Mitias & Al-Jasmi (2004); UNESCO, 2006; Wierzbicka, 2006). Even critics of ID such as Igbino (2011), Gorski (2008), and Aman (2012) understand and frame many of their arguments in terms of Eurocentric social policies.

Eurocentric notions of intercultural dialogue cannot accurately capture the personal cultural discourses or truly reflect the exchanges that happen between Elders, Knowledge Keepers, writers, editors, and ministry personnel during the PSSC. However, throughout the literature on cross-cultural dialogue there are many metaphors that better described our cultural exchange: building bridges (Aikenhead & Ogawa, 2007; Aikenhead & Michell, 2011); ethical space (Ermine, 2007); and the metaphor of camping spots (Vickers, 2007). Therefore, in the literature review, I explore two metaphors related to the concept of cultural brokerage that best illustrates the cultural exchanges which happened during PSSC.

Thesis Organization

The thesis consists of a prologue and five chapters. In the prologue I provided an autobiographical account to situate myself in the context of research with Aboriginal people and intercultural dialogue. In chapter one I provide the context for the Pearson Saskatchewan Science Collaboration and offer background for this study. Chapter two is a review of the literature, which explores how the concepts of relationships of power and resistance in Aboriginal education in contexts of provincial policy, ethical space, *oskâpêwis* (*Nehiyaw* for cultural helper), border crossings, and cultural broker. In chapter three I use a metaphor of the drumming circle to describe the study and the methods used. Chapter three also contains a separate discussion on Indigenous research methods to support my rationale for the use of Indigenous methods. Chapter four contains a discussion on qualitative methods as tools of research used for gathering knowledge and for making meaning. The findings of each

participant² are presented as individual reflective commentaries. Finally, in Chapter five I draw the insights from the reflective commentaries into conclusions by connecting them to literature. I conclude by making recommendations for future study.

² The participants in this study have waived their right to remain anonymous. Both Aboriginal participants wished to use their own names to adhere to cultural protocols which Elders and Knowledge, willingly and openly disclose their identities, contextualize their relationships, and acknowledge the sources of their cultural knowledge.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter, I present a review of the literature on several topics necessary to my study. First, I describe the political conditions and the historical context for the development of Aboriginal education in Saskatchewan. This background traces the evolution of policy that led to the Indigenization of curriculum, and subsequently to the development of resources such as the *Pearson Saskatchewan Science* textbooks. Second, I explore concepts of cultural brokerage, ethical space, culture broker, and border crossings to better ascertain the means by which culture brokers create conditions for cross-cultural dialogue. Third, I explore the teachings on *oskâpêwisak* (*Nehiyaw* for cultural helpers) to discover whether their roles in the PSSC could be considered a form of cultural brokerage, if at all. Thus by drawing these various concepts together, I hope to better understand the role, the nature, and disposition of culture brokers in the context of our collaboration between First Nations and non-First Nation participants.

Contexts and conditions that led to the Indigenization of resources

Since Saskatchewan's foundation, provincial and federal authorities have held exclusive but shared authority over the education of all its citizens, including all Aboriginal peoples. Assimilationist systems, namely the residential schools, inflicted traumas on Aboriginal peoples, the consequences of which can be felt today (Aboriginal Healing Foundation [AHF], 2007, as cited in Walker, 2009). One of the significant impact on the Aboriginal population is a growing disparity between the educational success for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. The accumulating deficit in opportunity and academic success between Aboriginal and Non-

Aboriginal people, called educational debt, occurs over time as the result of past and continuing racism and discrimination (Ladson-Billings, 2006). This debt has a significant bearing on the future success of many young Aboriginal people, but it also has a significant impact on the social and economic wellbeing of society as a whole. As a result, successive Saskatchewan governments have attempted several strategies to address this issue. In this section, I describe one particular strategy, the Indigenization of curricula, which is meant as a strategy to promote culturally affirming classrooms and to raise the level of Aboriginal student success. This background is necessary to establish the context and the origin of the PSSC, and its significance as another means to promote AK in science.

Early education policies, designed to control and assimilate Aboriginal cultures, engendered many social consequences for many Aboriginal communities. Some of these practices included the removal of children from their homes and communities; the suppression of language and cultural practices; the prohibition of spiritual practices (Assembly of First Nations [AFN], 1972; Battiste, 2002; 2005; Pelletier, Cottrell, & Hardie, 2014). Yet, despite residential schools' obligation to care for students, many students suffered physical, sexual, and emotional trauma (Battiste, 2005; Grant, 1996; Pelletier et al., 2014; Neu, 1995). These abuses were reproduced as some victims transmitted their trauma to their children (AHF, 2007, as cited in Walker, 2009; Elias et al.; 2012; Evan-Campbell, 2008). The legacy of residential school has been proven to be connected to broader psychological and social issues such as, "alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, suicide, prostitution, gambling, homelessness, sexual abuse, violence, poverty, lack of parenting skills, and lack of a capacity to sustain healthy families and communities" (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2007, as cited in Walker, 2009, p. 10). Residential school systems have both the effect to disrupt traditional forms of learning and to

damage Aboriginal students and their relationship to schooling (Battiste 2002; 2011). Over time, the impact of residential school and wider social factors, such as poverty and racism, (Cottrell et al., 2012; Needham & Cottrell; Tupper, 2011) have contributed to a growing educational deficit among Aboriginal people; significantly lower graduation rates and significantly higher rates of attrition than the provincial average; and alienation from the educational system (Hampton & Roy, 2002; Pelletier et al., 2014).

For many Aboriginal people, the deficit has grown steadily wider since the Residential School period (Howe, 2011; Pelletier et al., 2014). With Aboriginal birthrates exceeding the provincial norm, successive Saskatchewan governments realized the impact that Aboriginal education debts have on the ability of Aboriginal people to contribute a future economy (Pelletier et al., 2014). The Continuous Improvement Frame (CIF) arose in part, because data collected about student provincial, national, and international achievement exams revealed that student achievement in this province lagged other jurisdictions (Saskatchewan Learning, 2006). This collection of achievement data also confirmed that Aboriginal students were not achieving as well as their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Consequently, the CIF sought to “improve the achievement all students and to remove the gaps for First Nations and Métis students” (SME, 2011, p.4).

Although achievement tests may be used to determine a lack of achievement among Aboriginal people, several scholars such as Bouvier and Karlenzig (2006), and Cottrell and Orloski (2014) contended that use of achievement data without an understanding of social and historical context to drive decisions about Aboriginal education, in particular the amelioration of the Aboriginal achievement gap, are too simplistic. These tests do not reflect the reality in the lives of many Aboriginal people, where powerful determinants of achievement such as

colonization, poverty, and racism have significant and lasting effects (Bouvier & Karlenzig, 2006; Cottrell & Orlowski; 2014).

Accepting that wider social determinants such as prejudice and oppression are in part responsible for and have contributed to the resulting Aboriginal education debt, one way the Ministry of Education and School systems try to address the issue is through the Indigenization of curricula and the development of culturally responsive/ affirming pedagogy. Through the Indigenization of curricula and learning materials, Bouvier and Karlenzig (2006) suggested that “non-Aboriginal students would also benefit greatly from having a deep understanding of this knowledge” (p. 28). Indigenization of curriculum and programming in concert with other strategies, such as Elders in the classroom, opportunities for staff and students to access customs, practices, promotion of language, and involvement of families and members of the community in development of programing are shown to have an impact on student achievement (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009; Pelletier et al., 2014; INAC, 2002).

Although there has been a shift in the Ministry’s position regarding Aboriginal Education over the past 30 years, attitudes towards the inclusion, equitable treatment, and respectful representation of Aboriginal people in curricula took considerable time to evolve. Critical race theory, theories on decolonization, and culturally responsive education have, in part, strongly influenced Aboriginal education in this province since the 1980’s (Bouvier & Karlenzig, 2006; Pelletier et al., 2014; Saskatchewan Education, 2000) and have both a direct and indirect impact on the state of Aboriginal education and policy in Saskatchewan (Pelletier et al., 2014). Their influences are evident in (a) the recommendations from bodies such as the Native Curriculum Review Committee (NCRC) and First Nations and Métis Education Provincial Advisory Committee (FNMEPAC); (b) partnerships with Aboriginal communities and organizations in

Aboriginal education; (c) the direction that governing bodies carry out the implementation of Aboriginal education; and (d) changes to curriculum itself.

Prejudice and continuing racism compelled the NCRC, established in the 80's by the Saskatchewan's ministry of Education, to state that in curricula "Native peoples must be presented as human beings having human societies" (NCRC, 1984, as cited in Abele et al., 2000, p. 14). By the 1990's, the provincial government recognized the significance that Aboriginal content and perspectives, ways of knowing, being, and doing in curriculum and its impact on the learning of all children (Abele et al., 2000; Aboriginal Education Provincial Advisory Committee [AEPAC], 2000; Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment [SETE], 1995; Ministry of Learning, 2010; Pelletier et.al., 2014; SME, 2009). SETE (1995) affirmed the unique cultural identities and distinctive worldview, learning styles and language of Aboriginal students, which needed to be appropriately represented in the curriculum, the school climate and teaching methods in the schools where Aboriginal students attended.

Later policy documents such as the *Five Year Plan* and the *Indian and Metis Education Policy From Kindergarten to Grade 12* enshrined and positioned the Aboriginal community as partners in the "planning, design and delivery, and where applicable, co-management of the education system at all levels" (SETE, 1995). Battiste (2002) and Bouvier and Karlenzig (2006) contend that the acknowledgement of the value and legitimacy of Aboriginal peoples' experiences restores the Aboriginal voice otherwise absent in the national historical discourse. Although, Ministry sentiment with respect to Aboriginal education seemingly reflected a change, there was still incongruence between policy and implementation.

This incongruence resulted from a disconnect between policy and implementation. Early documents only positioned outcomes for Aboriginal education as recommendations. These

recommendations appear as early as 1984 in the *Action Plan* and in subsequent revisions and updates such as *Indian and Metis Action Plan 1995* and the *Action Plan: 2000-2005*. Some of these recommendations had good results, translating into courses like Native Studies, Indian Language programs, and Aboriginal teacher programs like SUNTEP and ITEP (SETE, 1995). Other policies for actualization such as ones appearing in AEAPC (2000), for example, had little effect until curriculum renewal. In AEAPC (2000), the Ministry acknowledged that it had failed to provide an adequate “understanding [for teachers] of the unique needs of Aboriginal students” (2000). Earlier policies outlined broad plans and suggestions for actualization such as (1) the authentic inclusion of Aboriginal content and perspectives in the classroom; (2) partnerships with Aboriginal education partners; (3) building capacity through pre-service teacher program; and (4) planning for monitoring actualization progress and the development of long term strategy (AEPAC, 2000) but crucial cultural supports did not always exist for all schools until there were substantial changes to the wording of the curriculum.

The first step for actualization required a substantial change to reshape collective thinking around the nature of curricula as a guide to an understanding of the curriculum as mandatory and standardized. Traditionally, the *Evergreen Curriculum* existed as a guide. Relying on teacher professionalism to make decisions about pedagogy, the *Evergreen Curriculum* permitted teachers the discretion about what content to include, including the omission of Aboriginal content and perspectives in their lessons. Thus, Aboriginal perspectives and content were not taught in many classrooms. In contrast, the renewed curriculum is a program of studies, whose outcomes and indicators of success are standardized elements; these outcomes could be ignored or omitted. Thus teachers now had to implement outcomes that dealt specifically with Aboriginal

content and perspectives. Classroom resources were necessary to implement these outcomes and at division level, school systems.

Simultaneously with curriculum renewal in 2006, the Ministry introduced the Continuous Improvement Framework (CIF), a long-range, results-based school division planning initiative. The CIF was a response to achievement data showing that student achievement in this province lagged other jurisdictions (Saskatchewan Learning, 2006), suggesting that the Aboriginal achievement debt was growing. Consequently, the CIF sought to “improve the achievement all students and to remove the gaps for First Nations and Métis students” (SEM, 2011, p.4). Based on the CIF, all school divisions now must include a division wide goal for the improvement of Aboriginal student achievement, which is in part, connected to the ways many schools have embraced culturally responsive pedagogy and the Indigenization of curriculum to increase Aboriginal student success.

More recently the CIF has been replaced by sector plans. Schools are now mandated to include in their learning improvement strategies to meet provincial goals that relate directly to Aboriginal student success and achievement. In 2010, the Ministry of Education published *A Time for Significant Change* released as a guide and framework to facilitate division and school planning (Ministry of Education, 2010).

Although there are issues with the actualization of policies with respect to the Indigenization of programming at a political level, there are also factors that impede actualization in the classroom. For many non-Aboriginal teachers, the “fear of making a mistake” (Tupper, 2011, par. 25), thus misrepresenting cultures in some way, prevents many from including Aboriginal Knowledge in their teaching. For other non-Aboriginal teachers, ignorance about AK or epistemologies is a reason to omit AK from their practice. Tupper (2011)

called this position “ignorance as an epistemological stance” (par.5) and suggested that it is a form of resistance towards engaging with Aboriginal content, culture, and relationships in curriculum. Cottrell, Preston, and Pierce (2012); Cottrell and Orlowski (2014); and Needham and Cottrell (2015) cite racism among teachers, students, and parents as a barrier to inclusion and that it has the effect of keeping schools as neo-colonial sites.

Many schools remain neo-colonial sites because race and racism have become unquestioned features of Western societies. The influence of racism is so subtle, pervasive and entrenched within the social structure of systems like education and curricula that they become normative (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Slorózano & Yosso, 2002; Tupper, 2011; Williams, 2011). Critical race theorists who reject “dominant claims of meritocracy, neutrality, objectivity, and color-blindness” (Williams, 2011, p. 213) advocate for changes to structures within Western societies such as schools and curricula that promote and maintain the status quo, and promulgate oppression and control of minority groups. Tupper (2011) argued that “to counteract the role of curriculum in sustaining dominance and privilege, critical race theory uses voice and stories to reveal types of discrimination that are implicit in curriculum when only certain content and perspectives are included” (par. 10). Smith-Maddox and Solórzano (2002) outlined that through a critical response change can only happen if systems “seek to identify, analyze, and transform structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions” (p. 68).

Fear, racism, and ignorance describe a need for a systemic transformation supported by adequate training and resources. Anti-racist and decolonizing work are needed to critically examine and challenge assumptions and values in Imperialism inherent in systems such as teacher training programs and school systems (Mc Gregor, 2012; Williams, Sanford, Hoppers &

McGregor, 2012). Although there have been significant changes with regard to teacher training programming, Darling-Hammon (2006) and Phelan (2011) contended that core imperialist values and hierarchical models still remain. Thus, a change to culturally responsive programming, and development of training for people who have the openness and skills to bridge cultures is one possible counter-response to fear and ignorance. One probable role of the culture broker would be to connect these systems.

Culturally Responsive Schools

One way to redress the inequities in the education system for Aboriginal students involves changing the environment in which they learn. Research that supports culturally affirming pedagogy, which places value on the worldviews, spirituality, and traditions of Indigenous peoples, have numerous positive impacts on student learning (Au, 2001; Bishop, O’Sullivan, & Berryman, 2010; Dallavis, 2008; Harrison & Greenfield, 2011; Redwing-Saunders & Hill, 2007). Among these implications is the increase in students’ positive self-image and a greater sense of belonging, which leads to greater student engagement (Pelletier et al. 2014). Research on student engagement and retention challenges the way current learning environments and contexts reflect and serve the needs of the dominant culture and fail to acknowledge the unique worldviews, traditions, and cultures of Aboriginal students (Battiste, 2002; Canadian Council on Learning [CCL], 2009; Faries, 2009; Pelletier et al., 2014).

Within the past decade school divisions have attempted to adopt culturally responsive and affirming policies in their strategic plans (Pillay, 2015; Ministry of Education, 2010) but the change has been slow to translate in practice (Bugler et al., 2015). In 2004, Saskatchewan Learning (2004) admitted that “many First Nations and Métis students in the province do not find that schools are culturally affirm places” (p39). Thus in 2009, the province committed to

working with educational partners “to create a culturally responsive learning program that benefits all learners” (SME, 2009, p.15). The following year, the Ministry released *A Time for Significant Leadership* which provided school divisions a template to create and assess long term outcomes for the development of a culturally affirming school climate. Later, Pelletier et al. (2014) produced a final Joint Task Force report which provided research evidence to support culturally affirming schools. Yet, recently, in drafts of current school division strategic plans, some school officials acknowledged that strategies to create culturally responsive schools that would promote success for Aboriginal students are currently absent in local school learning improvement plans. They state, that “also missing and critical for supporting Métis and First Nations student success are the following.... ongoing, systemic, relational and culturally responsive professional learning and development for teachers, administrators and other staff in provincial and First Nation schools” (Bugler et al., 2015, p.3).

Consequently, many school divisions are now attempting to create culturally affirming climates in their schools for Aboriginal students, and to develop professional development programmes for their teaching staff, all with the aim of increasing Aboriginal student achievement and retention. To facilitate some of this professional development as it pertains to work with Aboriginal cultures, however, there needs to be sensitivity around the development and implantation with respect to protocols, relationships with people in the community, especially Elders, and the appropriate treatment of cultural teachings given to staff. This is a gap that can be filled by the culture broker. The culture broker would have a clearer understanding of how to devise and implement an appropriate professional development programme that best reflects the values of the community and respects Aboriginal ways of knowing, being, and doing.

Culture Brokers and Border Crossings

In this section of the literature review I explore research on border crossing; and the nature, traits, and the role of the culture broker. Although border crossing and cultural brokerage are related concepts, it is important to stress that there is a clear distinction between these two ideas. The former describes “a metaphorical act of moving from one culture to another” (Aikenhead, 1996, p.6) whereas, the latter explains how key figures, culture brokers or “in-between people”, adeptly mediate their crossings between cultures or the crossing of another person into a different culture. Both ideas need explanation to establish the background knowledge for an understanding about the nature, role, and traits that made culture brokers in the PSSC successful. Consequently, this work will focus primarily but not exclusively on the descriptions of culture brokers and border crossing in the context of Aboriginal education and science pedagogy.

Culture Broker

An exploration of the nature, traits, and dispositions of the “culture broker” is a necessary prerequisite to understand how individuals facilitated a successful cross-cultural exchange in the context of the PSSC. Originally the term suggested that the culture broker was a kind of “marginal man” and a “middle man” (Michie, 2014, p.5) but today the term is widely used in many fields and denotes an individual who is able to work cross-culturally to facilitate the transition for people from one culture to another (Aikenhead, 2001; Michie, 2003; Szasz, 2001). The culture broker is an individual that may identify or belong to one specific cultural group, but their knowledge, position and acceptance in another distinctive cultural community allows them to facilitate positive cultural interaction (Michie, 2003). More recently, the term is closely associated with hybridity and “change agent” (Michie, p. 5). As change agents, culture brokers

facilitate cultural transformations within societies or within the individuals themselves. Hybrids are individuals who are culture brokers but who are themselves transformed by their cross-cultural work. Hybridity may also refer to people of mixed heritage (Michie, 2014; Szasz, 2001). Moreover, Michie (2014) and Aikenhead (1997) regard the act of cultural brokering as a kind of strategy for cross-cultural work for promoting cross-cultural understanding.

Notions of culture broker and border crossings have been used in culturally responsive health research (McElroy & Jezewski, 2000; Michie, 2003; Satterfield, Burd, Valdez, Hosey, & Eagle Shield, 2002). Although there are numerous other examples, Satterfield, Burd, Valdez, Hosey, and Eagle Shield (2002)'s work is the most relevant to this study. Satterfield et al. (2002) used the term "in-between people" to refer to community health care representatives (CHR) as culture brokers. Their research identified ways that culture brokers were effective at promoting Diabetes awareness in Alaskan Native communities³. Being members of the community and health care professionals, the CHRs were uniquely positioned to give health care guidance that respects the local knowledge and the local ecology. They were also able to mobilize resources through their connections to the community, and provide advice that was consistent with the community's values. The CHRs' backgrounds enabled them to quickly establish trust with the community.

In pedagogy, the notion of culture brokerage focused extensively on the role of the teacher but serves as a useful metaphor to understand ways that teachers help students cross from one cultural context into another. The teacher as culture broker can: (1) ease students' transition between the sub-culture of the home to the sub-culture of school science (Aikenhead, 1996); (2) has the potential to change the way language teachers think of their roles in the acquisition of

³ Please note here, I apply the term Native as it is used by Indigenous peoples in Alaska to refer to themselves, and as it found in Satterfield et al. (2002) but that this term is synonymous with the term Aboriginal.

language and culture in second language learning (Clouet, 2006; Wyatt, 1979); and (3) mediates the transition for students and maximize their success in learning in the mainstream culture (Gentemann & Whitehead, 1983).

Gentemann and Whitehead (1983), Tse (1996), Clouet (2006), and Wyatt (1978-79) maintained that the connection between culture and language automatically positions the language teacher as culture broker. During the acquisition of a second language the values, meaning, and perspectives of a culture are spontaneously transmitted since the teacher explicitly attaches the cultural meaning to each word so that the learner can understand what the word means and is able to connect these words to previous learning and background. In so doing, the teacher becomes a *de facto* culture broker. Tse (1996) explained that within many minority families, often the eldest, became the *de facto* “socializing agent” (p. 487) and decision maker because they are able to translate and interact with school or government personnel, thereby brokering information between family members and teachers or other members of the community. Like other authors, Wyatt (1978-79) believes there is a strong connection between language and culture, but he suggests that in the acquisition of Aboriginal language only teachers of that culture and who speak that language may act as culture brokers between the school, the home, and the Community.

Motivations and Dispositions of Culture Brokers

There are many motivations that compel individuals to become culture brokers (Michie, 2014; Szasz, 2001). However, there is less research that explores the traits and the disposition that make culture brokers successful and compatible for this kind of work (Michie, 2014). Most of the literature describes but does not explicitly explore these traits and dispositions (Michie, 2014). Nevertheless, Aikenhead’s (1998; 2002) work on the disposition of teachers as culture

brokers, Michie's (2014) exploration of the teacher as culture broker working cross-culturally, and Szasz (2001)'s anthology of culture brokers in historical, anthropological, and cultural contexts provide a look at these traits and dispositions.

In Michie (2014) there are descriptions of traits common to culture brokers who work cross-culturally. Many culture brokers are naturally "border crossers" themselves, meaning that these people had to have made their own transitions into other cultures. Consequently, these border crossers have a deeper and sustained experience of another culture, which permits a deeper sense of respect and understanding of the new culture; and thus they are better able to bridge cultural crossings for others, trying to do the same. According to Michie (2014), border crossers who "use their understanding of both cultures to assist the indigenous people" (p. 39) are a form of culture broker, called the border workers. Adding that positive cultural experiences promoted a heightened curiosity for another culture and instills a strong desire to understand other peoples' culture, Michie (2014) further pointed out that these individuals become allies to the Indigenous community, account for and respect the wishes of community and have the approval and support of the community.

In Aikenhead's (2002) work, the traits of the culture broker are not explicitly described. Rather we can infer those traits from the actions of these teachers. For example, the effective non-Indigenous culture broker teacher affirms students' cultural and personal worldviews, and ways of knowing; builds upon students' prior experiences to connect students to science learning; appreciates ways that aspects of culture and knowledge fit and complement curriculum; and invites students into that learning (Aikenhead, 2002). Science teaching, Aikenhead (2002) suggested, must contain a decolonizing element; must acknowledge historical and continuing

colonization of Aboriginal students; and must address the conflicts between Western and Indigenous values.

Szasz (2001) concluded that culture brokers shared many traits and are motivated to do this work by different reasons. These traits included a curiosity “about ‘the other side’ of the cultural divide...receptiveness to the ways and words of others” (Szasz, 2001, p. 295), determination and resilience despite obstacles and failure and proof of trustworthiness through their commitment to the cause of cultural brokerage for all the peoples involved. Although these traits are shaped by circumstance and chance (Michie, 2004; Szasz, 2001). Szasz (2001) further suggested that three factors may have contributed to their eventual development namely “internal networks” or ties and relationships with people of disparate communities, “mixed heritage”, being from the cultural background of two distinct communities afforded the culture broker with the understanding to bridge dialogue between these communities that is better than most and lastly, gender, played a role in how culture brokers could more easily gain acceptance among people of the same gender or viewed as less of a threat by the opposite gender.

In the literature on culture broker only Szasz (2001) explicitly suggests reasons for cultural brokerage. She suggested that some culture brokers were motivated by material gain, “sense of power” (p. 298), or position. She pointed to William Clark, a frontiersman who, as culture broker, abused his position by manipulating American Indigenous tribes to act against each other. Conversely, other culture brokers act out of a sense of commitment or justice. For example, Navaho Chief Robert Young, spent a lifetime brokering agreements between his people and the federal government. Some culture brokers derived satisfaction, admiration and respect from various parties through their works of cultural brokerage. Whatever the motivation, Szasz suggested that for each culture broker there entailed a significant cost or risk, such as rejection,

peril, emotional cost, or even death. Within the culture broker internal and/or extrinsic forces are at work but the rewards often exceed the costs (Michie, 2003; 2014; Szasz, 2001).

Border Crossing and Ethical Space

Two metaphors in the literature best illustrate the cultural exchange during the PSSC. These metaphors are ethical space and border crossings. The metaphor of ethical space was chosen for this section because the concept establishes how discourse with Aboriginal people is created through respect for Aboriginal ways of knowing and learning and provides a context for a discussion on protocols and the role of culture helpers, the *oskâpêwisak*, as possible culture brokers. The second metaphor, border crossings, aptly describes a transition from one culture to another that many members of the PSSC, as non-Aboriginals, had to make in order to really appreciate how the culture of the Aboriginal people complements scientific ways of understanding the natural world.

Border Crossing

Border crossing is a metaphor to describe the transition that an individual makes from one culture to another (Aikenhead, 1996; Michie, 2014; Szasz, 2001). For Michie (2014) border crossing is an ability to easily transition between cultures that often contains an element of risk. Aikenhead (1996) suggested that border crossing happens between cultures but can also occur between sub-cultures within a dominant culture, such as the transition that students make from the sub-culture of the home and the school.

Aikenhead (1996), Erickson (2004), and Michie (2014) maintained that there is often an element of risk and danger to border crossing. Szasz (2001) described the culture broker as one who “straddles the divide” (p.295). Similarly, Haig-Brown (2008) used words such as “collide”, and employed imagery, such as two canoes passing over a river, to illustrate issues that can arise

during cultural exchanges. Anzaldua (as cited in Orozco-Mendoza, 2008) described borders between cultures as divisions between the known and unknown; and safe from unsafe. Depending on the context of use, notions of “borders” and “boundaries” may invoke a “we\us” or “they\them” dichotomy.

Although there is a natural distinctiveness among cultures, Erickson (2004) warned that there is a distinction to be made between cultural borders and cultural boundaries. The former are the limits imposed by cultural differences such as language and result from the natural evolution of culture. In contrast, cultural boundaries are fluid social constructs that are based on perceived or even real differences but they are used to justify power dynamics. Erickson (2004) suggested that cultural boundaries are projections of imposed flaws and contradictions that people of one cultural group apply to people of other cultures. Cultural boundaries create barriers, locating everyone else as outsider thus othering and possibly vilifying them (Reilly, 2011).

One’s positioning as an outsider, means that a border crossing may have adverse effects. Michie’s (2014) described those severe reactions as “culture shock”. Michie believed that among people who experience other cultures, experiences of border crossing are so negative they retreat into their own cultural positions, values, and worldviews. In some cases, individuals who experience culture shock, never return.

In the context of Aboriginal and minority learners, differences in values of the home culture and school culture may create conflict and make cultural crossings difficult for many immigrant and Aboriginal children (Aikenhead, 1997; Aikenhead & Huntley, 1999; Cobern & Aikenhead, 1998; Costa, 1995; Jegede & Aikenhead, 1999). When Aboriginal students perceive a conflict between their worldview and the subculture of science, they may choose to dismiss aspects of their own epistemology in order to assimilate scientific knowledge instead

(Aikenhead, 1997; 2006; Aikenhead & Huntley, 1999). Conversely, they may reject science outright to protect their cultural identity but risk failing at science learning (Aikenhead, 1996; Aikenhead & Huntley, 1999; Cobern & Aikenhead, 1998). Often, alienated students may employ strategies such as “Fatima’s rules” (Aikenhead, 2006, pp. 28-29) that feigns actual learning. For example, students may memorize enough facts to pass an exam, but have not internalized the knowledge.

Teacher biases equally make cultural crossing difficult for Aboriginal students. Erickson (2004) suggested that when American teachers viewed African-American children’s inability to read as a cultural distinction, rather than the product of social inequity, the classroom becomes a hostile place for these border crossers. Similarly, differences in cultural learning styles lead some teachers to perceive First Nation students as less engaged since they may not often give their opinions when instructed to do so (Aikenhead, 1996). Thus, a teacher’s own cultural biases may prevent him or her from realizing when an Aboriginal student remains silent, they demonstrate respect and are actually learning. If, however, Aboriginal students are able to see that curricular content complements their existing cultural frameworks, they are more likely to embrace learning and to find success. Therefore, Aikenhead and Huntley (1999) suggested that teachers as culture brokers can validate Aboriginal ways of knowing and culture through curriculum and instruction; can establish network of peers who are willing to create culturally responsive environments and learning supports based on the local Aboriginal culture; and develop appropriate hands-on materials for elementary age children by providing early experiences of play that promote an understanding of Western culture that is respectful of their own local culture.

Positions of cultural brokerage

Positions of cultural brokerage are orientations, approaches to culture brokerage or positioning that culture brokers take to situate themselves with the cultures with whom they work (Aikenhead, 1997; Michie, 2003, 2014; Szasz, 2001). Szasz (2001) described this positioning as “a range of responses to the border-world” (p. 299). It is appropriate to consider cultural brokerage as a strategy (Aikenhead, 1997; Michie, 2014) as well as a range of positions. As strategy, culture brokering may be used to broaden people’s understanding of other cultures, to promote awareness of other cultures, and to create hybrid or new knowledges, the aim of culture but the needs of the participating cultures, the purpose of brokerage, the culture broker’s experience, and the context of situation also influence the position that the culture broker adopts and the direction of the brokerage (Michie, 2014).

Generally, the orientation determines in which way culture exchange occurs. In one orientation, culture brokers introduce elements of another culture, worldview, or ways of knowing to their community. The example Szasz (2001) gives, concerns American Horse, a chieftain of the *Show* Indian tribe in the United States, who after long associations with American colonists, recognized and endorsed certain elements of American culture such as education but spoke out against other elements such as war with the union armies. Many of the examples in her anthology describe how cultural influence and elements flow from the dominant society to the marginalized one.

Conversely, the culture broker may also introduce elements of their culture into another culture. The PSSC is an example where Elders and Knowledge Keepers, acting as culture brokers, introduced elements of Aboriginal Knowledge to a group of non-First Nations people. In a third position, there is a fluid exchange of ideas where the culture broker who well immersed

in both cultures or maybe of mixed-ancestry, introduces elements of both to the other (Szasz 2001, Michie, 2003). Pablita Velarde, a Pueblo artist, whose life, work, and art reflected a hybridity between Western and Peublan cultures, stated “I was a kind of go-between in telling one side this life, and telling this side the other life. I balanced it somehow” (as cited in Hyer, 2001, p. 274). This last position, a bi-directional cultural brokerage, creates a fairer exchange of cultural ideas, elements, and worldviews.

In the end, I would argue that often there is not always clear single direction of cultural exchange. Depending on the context, the purpose of dialogue, and the motivations of each participant, any of these orientations may apply.

Spaces of Cultural Encounter

The literature on border crossing and culture broker use imagery such as the “border world” or the “cultural interface” (Michie, 2014) to describe a place of encounter but sometimes, these encounters can often lack respect (Szazs, 2001) or is filled with risk (Aikenhead, 2001; Michie, 2003; Szasz, 2001). In contrast, there are concepts that describe hopeful and respectful encounter. These concepts include ethical space, third space (Bhabha, 1994), and two-world approaches (Kapyrka & Dockstator, 2012 ; Styres, Zinga, Bennett & Bomberly, 2010). Although these concepts are similar and could describe the cultural exchange in the PSSC, I delimit this discussion to the notion of ethical space which describes the possibility for meaningful cross-cultural exchange of respectful discourse within the context of working with Aboriginal people (Ermine, 2000; 2007), and subsequently establishes a context to discuss how the observance of protocols, ways of sharing and handling cultural knowledge, creates conditions for respectful discourse with Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

Ethical space is an intangible place where disparate parties engage in respectful discourse. Poole (1972) originally conceived this idea from a political photograph depicting the occupation of Czechoslovakia. In the photo, a Czech civilian faced off with his Russian occupier. Poole realized that the physical distance between them, represented a metaphorical gulf of social, cultural, and political implications. Both Poole (1972) and Ermine (2007) concluded that discourse only occurs when a level of respect for the other is reached. From Poole's idea, Ermine (2007) reframed the argument to reflect his personal experiences of discrimination as an Aboriginal person. By contextualizing ethical space in terms of the ongoing history of colonized peoples, Ermine established that a level of respect and recognition had to be attained for ethical dialogue (Ermine, 2007; Ermine et al., 2004). In the context of the PSSC, many elements came together to create those conditions of respect.

Other Aboriginal scholars such as Battiste (2000), Cajete (2000), and Kovach (2009) recognized that ethical space has to be deliberately created. Battiste (2000) and Kovach (2009) asserted that in cross-cultural research or collaboration with Aboriginal people, there must be a fundamental respect for Indigenous rights and ways of knowing, doing, and being. Researchers, teachers, and learners that follow the ethic of *mîyo pîkiskwatitowin* establish relationships with the community, and respect the protocols that govern these relations and the ethical treatment of traditional knowledge. Without an explicit understanding of protocol and an appreciation of the way that protocol establishes trust, even the most willing people cannot fully realize the benefits of engagement with cultural resource people.

Nature of *oskâpêwisak*

In this section I explore how conditions of respect and ethical space were created and maintained during the PSSC. Non-Aboriginal participants of the PSSC had to be taught

protocols, ways of respecting and disseminating Aboriginal knowledge. Among the participants with knowledge of protocols, who took on the role of culture broker were *oskâpêwisak*⁴, a *Nehiyaw* term denoting cultural helpers. Thus, it is important to clarify their role and the specific nature of their cultural brokerage. Moreover, I draw on cultural teachings given to me by *Nehiyaw* teachers and advisors to flesh out a fuller understanding of the role since not much is published in the literature about *oskâpêwis*.

In a very broad sense, all cultures have some form of helper (Satterfield et al., 2002) but among the Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan, the notion of cultural helper has a very specific meaning. It is important first to describe what the traditional understanding of *oskâpêwis* is and then to explain how the term will be used in this thesis. In the *Nehiyaw* language, the cultural helper is called an “oskâpêwis”, which is the singular form but is “oskepewisak” in the plural; “oskâpêwis” is defined as “elder's helper, helper at ceremonies” (Wolvengrey, 2011).

The word *oskâpêwisak* is not a ubiquitous term that is applied to all Aboriginal cultures although each Nation has some form of cultural helper or Elder's helper. In this thesis when I referenced cultural helpers from other Aboriginal cultures I used and applied the term *oskâpêwisak* but I did not intend the general application of the term as an affront. Rather I recognized that each First Nation has a distinct name for *oskâpêwisak* in their respective languages, but to use each distinct term would be confusing for the reader.

The use of the term *oskâpêwis* in this thesis does not in any way imply that all cultural helpers involved in the PSSC were all *Nehiyaw*. Nor do I suggest there were only significant contributions made to the project by *Nehiyaw* people. I also recognize that some cultural helpers

⁴ There are variations in spelling for “oskâpêwis”. For example, Makokis (2008) renders the words as “oskapeyosak” (plural form) or “oskapeyos” (singular form), while in the Cree Online dictionary the spelling is “oskâpêwis”.

prefer to only encourage ceremonial participation among their own community. Not all cultural helpers are interested or even involved in intercultural or bi-cultural dialogue.

According to Makokis (2008) and University of Regina (2008) the *oskâpêwisak* are “ceremony helpers”⁵, and depending on the kind of ceremony or the task at hand, the ceremonial help may be young a man⁶ or woman. Although young girls and woman learn to become helpers to woman Elders, they are not called *oskâpêwis* but instead are known as women-in-learning (Mary Lee, 2016). Mendelbaum (1978) called the *oskâpêwis* a “ceremonial server,” (p. 310). *Oskâpêwisak* begin their training at a very young age (University of Regina, 2008). By helping an Elder, the *oskâpêwis* gradually learns the ceremonial protocols and becomes familiar with aspects of ceremony, this role informed by oral tradition occurs over the individual’s lifetime. According to Ermine, Sinclair, and Browne (2005), protocols are “practices by which knowledge is handled” (p.18). This knowledge includes sacred knowledge, which requires a kind of understanding that only certain cultural people, namely Elders and Knowledge Keepers, have earned the right to have (Ermine, Sinclair & Browne, 2005). Makokis (2008) explained that the *oskâpêwis* received their guidance through teachings from Elders, both male and female, who might preside over a ceremony. In this way the young men and women learned the protocols of ceremony.

I learned from Elder Simon Kitwayhat, Elder Mary Lee, Elder Danny Musqua and Knowledge Keeper Delvin Kanewiyakiho that *oskâpêwisak* are mentored in many aspects of ceremony, and shown protocols involving many ceremonies. They are taught how to light the

⁵ Note that University of Regina’s description included Assiniboine (Nakota) and Saulteaux (Nakawē), which suggests that although each First Nations in Saskatchewan has its own equivalent term for *oskâpêwisak*, the role of cultural helper constitute an important and common feature of their cultures.

⁶ Oskâpêwis denotes a human helper; this distinction is important because in the literature the term helper has multiple usages. For example, the word “helper” when used in reference to “spiritual helpers” or “spirit guides”, often denotes spiritual beings that come to the assistance of humans when invoked by prayer or in ceremony (Haggarty, 2008; Sanchez, 2000).

Smudge, what stones to pick for a sweat, where to pick sage and sweet grass, what trees to cut for a lodge, where to place a lodge, and how to serve at a Feast. There are very specific, personal and ceremonial teachings that cultural helpers acquire over time that they are not permitted to share.

Although *oskâpêwisak* perform a very important ceremonial function, I have come to know that *oskâpêwisak* also help Elders in all ordinary but very necessary non-ceremonial functions. By watching and listening to Knowledge Keepers Delvin Kanewiyakiho, Knowledge Keeper Jeanne Auramenko, and Elder Mary Lee, I learned that *oskâpêwisak* ensure that arrangements are made for an Elder's care when they travel to a ceremony. They ensure that elders are made to feel welcome, and that Elders are accompanied to a cultural site for a ceremony.

In the context of cultural brokerage, it should be clear that I am not implying that all *oskâpêwisak* are culture brokers. Although all *oskâpêwisak* by definition have cultural knowledge, not all are culture brokers or “in-between people” who wish to share that knowledge. Certainly not all *oskâpêwisak* see the benefits of using their knowledge and positionality for the purpose of working towards cultural and epistemic hybridity. And in fact, some individuals may take an absolutist or essentialist position on cultural issues. I certainly do not want to create the impression that all *oskâpêwisak* are culture brokers or have a bicultural orientation. This generalization would homogenize all *oskâpêwisak* and also can mislead non-Aboriginal teachers who might be expecting such an orientation. I do however suggest that some individuals in the PSSC who are culture helpers, employed their cultural knowledge to assist in bridging cultures.

Summary

When the literature on the dispositions, motivations, and the traits of a culture broker is considered together, the culture broker is best understood as a cross-culture worker (Aikenhead, 2001; Michie, 2003) whose skills, abilities, and positioning within and between cultural communities (Szasz, 2001; Michie, 2003) permits them to help others make successful border crossing for people between cultures (Aikenhead, 1997; Aikenhead & Huntley, 1999; Ericson, 2004; McElroy & Jezewski, 2000; Michie, 2003; Satterfield, et al. 2002; Szasz, 2001). These people may be motivated and shaped by internal forces or they choose to work for extrinsic reward (Michie, 2003; 2014; Szasz, 2001).

While border crossing is a useful metaphor to describe the transition that people make into other cultures, the notion of a culture broker helps us to understand how these facilitators create the conditions to mitigate the risk of crossing and to create dialogue. A standard of respect and ethical space are necessary for that dialogue to occur. Ethical space, especially in relationships with Aboriginal people (Ermine, 2007) necessitates a recognition of the significance of protocol. In the context of the PSSC, many *oskâpêwis*, culture helpers with knowledge of protocol, helped many of the non-Aboriginal personnel grasp that significance and allowed ethical dialogue to happen.

The teacher as culture broker is needed to help Aboriginal and minority children to make a successful transition between the cultures of home and school (Aikenhead, 1997; Aikenhead & Huntley, 1999; Cobern & Aikenhead, 1998; Costa, 1995; Jegede & Aikenhead, 1999) and to increase student success and retention (Friensen & Friesen, 2002; MacPherson, 2010; Hogan, 2008; Sleeter, 2001). The existing nature of teacher education programs privileges the

Eurocentric position (Gilbert et al., 2004; Solomon, et al., 2005) and continues to maintain a neo-colonist status quo (Needham & Cottrell, 2008; St. Dennis, 2007).

Thus a change in the way that many teachers view cultural differences is required to change current practice (Erickson, 2004), this speaks about the need to continually decolonize teacher training programs (Kitchen et al., 2009; Pelletier et al., 2014). Thus a program that trains teachers to work cross-culturally would create culturally responsive environments that would benefit Aboriginal students (Friensen & Friesen, 2002; MacPherson, 2010; Hogan, 2008; Sleeter, 2001).

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

Introduction

Learning how to drum fundamentally changed how I came to understand myself in relationship to *Nehiyaw* people, to protocols, to my teachers, and their cultural teachings. This deepening of knowing informs my regard and respect for the teachings I receive from Elders and Knowledge Keepers. This experience of learning *Nehiyaw* worldview, epistemology, and ceremony through song and drum describes how I think about research with Indigenous people. In this chapter I explore a methodology for coming to understand research with Indigenous people through my personal experiences of learning to drum and to sing.

This chapter comprises several parts. The first part considers ways to research with Indigenous people and its implications for this study. The aforementioned section explores how Aboriginal and Indigenous scholars come to understand research and how they shape distinctive approaches to research that honours Aboriginal and Indigenous epistemologies, axiologies, and ontologies. In the second part of this chapter, I outline a conceptual framework that uses drumming as a metaphor for the way I come to understand ways to research with Indigenous people. I modeled my approach after the work of many Indigenous and Aboriginal scholars and incorporate many elements into this study. Some cultural considerations included research and researcher preparation, ethics, participant selection, ways of gathering knowledge, ways of interpreting knowledge, presentation of findings through reflective commentary, and ways to give back to the community. Two qualitative methods, semi-structured interview and modified grounded theory, were used as tools to gather knowledge and to interpret knowledge respectively. Findings were presented as reflective commentaries.

Background

In the last thirty years, Indigenous research methodologies have been expressly conceived to liberate and to re-define the Indigenous cultural research agenda from the academic and cultural hegemony imposed from the outside (Rigney, 2001; Smith, 2012). Chilisa (2012) described this scholarly hegemony as “methodological imperialism” since the “Academy” established rules that fix how research on Indigenous peoples had to be conceptualized, collected, studied, and represented from Eurocentric positions and perspectives. Indigenous research methodologies share several common characteristics and values that make them distinct from other kinds of qualitative methodologies. To decolonize my own work, I explored ways these common values may be used to better inform my own approach to research.

Although this list is not exhaustive, I identified four major qualities. First, Indigenous research methodologies ground their interpretation and understanding of knowledge from a cultural perspective, and thereby, endorse and validate a cultural construction of knowledge that acknowledges Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies (Absolon & Willett, 2004; Bateson, 2006; Kovach, 2009; Weber-Pillwax, 2004; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2009). Second, they employ culturally appropriate research methods in their conceptual frameworks (Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009; Lavallée, 2009; Wilson, 2009). Third, they decolonize scholarship by challenging the construction and the authority of Eurocentric knowledge (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Hall, 2012; Ormiston, 2010; Zavala, 2013). And lastly, they advance the interest of the Indigenous community (Absolon and Willett, 2004; Weber-Pillwax, 2004).

In research with Indigenous people a researcher’s conceptual framework respects, is consistent with, and aligns with cultural knowledge systems, values, and beliefs (Fiddler, 2014; Kovach, 2009; Makosis, 2008; Wilson, 2008). Aspects of cultural systems such as relationship

with the land, epistemologies, spirituality, values, and identity strongly influence the conceptualization of Indigenous research and the choices of methods that are used (Fiddler, 2014; Lavallée, 2009; Makosis, 2008, Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). The inclusion of ceremonies such as Smudges and Sweats, and self-centering practices such as self-reflection, form part of cultural and researcher preparation (Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008).

Research methods must also acknowledge, validate, and align with aspects of Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies (Absolon & Willet, 2004; Bateson, 2006; Kovach, 2009). Wilson (2008) suggested that “as long as the methods fits the ontology, epistemology and axiology of Indigenous research paradigms, they can be borrowed from other suitable research paradigms” (p. 39). Kovach (2009) reiterated this point, stating that “it is not the method, per se, that is the determining characteristic of Indigenous methodologies, but rather the interplay (the relationship) between the method and paradigm and the extent to which the method, itself, is congruent with an Indigenous worldview” (p.40). Thus some qualitative methods, such as reflection, narrative inquiry, or sharing circles would be appropriate (Bessarab & Ngandu, 2010; Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009; Lavallée, 2009; Wilson, 2009).

In some Aboriginal communities, the ethics and culture of the people may determine the methods that researchers use (Weber-Pillwax, 2004). In many Aboriginal cultures, for example, protocols around the handling of sacred knowledge is one consideration of research design (Ermine, 2007; Fiddler, 2014). Wilson (2008), Knight (1999), and Kovach (2009) maintained that for many Aboriginal peoples the observance of protocols acknowledges one’s responsibility and accountability to the land, and to the community. To ensure that research design follows ethical cultural principles researchers may seek guidance from trusted advisors like Elders, family members, or Knowledge Keepers. Axiological considerations in Indigenous research

include cultural ethics, such as giving back to the community and the wise handling and sharing of cultural knowledge through the observance of protocols such as the giving of tobacco. Understanding and implementing cultural elements such as protocols in the research with Aboriginal people cultivates a respect other ways of knowing and creates an ethical space (Ermine, 2007).

Research with Indigenous communities has added ethical considerations. Weber-Pillwax (2004) maintained that researcher have to be responsible for the impact that their research might have on the community. There are many examples where the impact on Indigenous communities have been detrimental. For example, in Africa, communities of people, especially women, were dehumanized and considered by researchers as “fields of investment” (Chilisa, 2012, p.76). These communities rarely saw or enjoyed the benefits of that research (Chilisa, 2012). In Canada, Aboriginal people, considered subjects of research that focused on social ills such as rates of incarceration, poverty, and addiction, only reinforced harmful stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples (Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008).

Research that honours Indigenous cultures is written from a perspective that respects Indigenous peoples, their identities, and their stories (Kovach, 2009). Ormiston (2010), for instance, suggested a decolonizing approach that re-examines so-called Eurocentric “truths” about Indigenous peoples. That re-examination considers ways that the academy has privileged some ways of knowing over others (Rigney, 2001). Chilisa (2012) argued that, “[An Afrocentric conceptual framework] places African ways of perceiving reality, ways of knowing, and value systems on equal with other scholarly examination of human experiences” (p. 185). Such approaches are necessary for Indigenous peoples to address their experiences as colonized peoples.

Decolonizing research and privileging Indigenous voices acknowledges a legacy of marginalization and misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in academia (Crazy Bull, 1997; Rigney, 2001; Smith, 2012). This kind of research permits Indigenous societies to correct historical misrepresentations of their culture and knowledge systems (Wilson, 2008), and permits the representation of truth, values, and worldviews from Indigenous perspectives (Absolon, 2001). Repositioned as partners in research Indigenous peoples define their own legacies (Makosis, 2008). Denzin and Lincoln (2008) suggested that “critical indigenous inquiry begins with concerns of indigenous people” (p.2) and must consider the benefits to the Indigenous community.

Decolonizing methodologies reposition Indigenous communities from a position as subjects of study to active participant and collaborator (Chilisa, 2012; Wilson, 2008). For Makosis (2008) decolonization is a transformative process in which Indigenous people regain a sense of identity and self-determination. She stated, “I see [Indigenous] research as a process and framework that can be utilized to decolonize, transform, and empower those involved to understand the sacred positions they occupy” (Makosis, 2008; p.40). The engagement of Indigenous Elders as partners in research is an example in which Elders are acknowledged for the sacred positions they occupy (Weber-Pillwax, 2001). According to Weber-Pillwax collaboration with Indigenous people make them “active partners in the co-creation of contemporary Indigenous knowledge” (p.171). These collaborations ensure that key resource people, such as Elders are recognized for their intellectual contributions to scholarship (Weber-Pillwax).

Consequently, in research work with Indigenous peoples, the researcher has two significant ethical obligations: (a) the first is to design an approach that employs appropriate

methodological tools that are consistent with the epistemological, axiological, and ontological position of the people for whom the research is intended (Fiddler, 2014; Lavallée, 2009; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008); and (b) the second involves the way(s) that his or her research honours the relationships with the people involved with the research through its presentation, interpretation, and dissemination (Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008).

To fulfill these obligations, I included these elements of research in my framework in order to decolonize my own work. First, I situate myself in the context of learning from and researching with Aboriginal Elders, from people at Oskayak, and through my relationship with Delvin Kanewiyakiho. By expressly stating that I am not Indigenous, I admit that I still have decolonizing of my own to do. Second, I engaged Indigenous peoples as partners in research. I am led by Aboriginal cultural teachers, Elder Mary Lee and Knowledge Keeper Delvin Kanewiyakiho, whose transcripts are included as stories from which other people may learn.

In my approach and in my writing, I examine and challenge so-called truths about Indigenous peoples. My conceptual frame considers my experiences learning to drum and sing with *Nehiyaw* people. I was thoughtful about the research methods I used. These methods, reflective commentary and grounded theory, discussed in a later section, align with Indigenous research methodology as well as cultural axiology. I used Indigenous terms where I can, to decolonize terminology. By using *Nehiyaw* terms I intend to honour the people in whose territory this thesis is written. In centering myself and preparing for research, I entered the Sweat lodge with tobacco and announced my intentions to the community gathered in the Sweat lodge. I smudged and prayed with Elders and Knowledge Keepers before each interview. I observed the local protocols to honor the ethics of the people with whom I work. For me, decolonizing meant

abandoning old ways of researching, and embracing another way of seeking and interpreting knowledge gifted to me.

Research Methodology and Conceptual Framework

Many Indigenous scholars have heavily influenced my thinking about Indigenous research methodologies, but the writings of Kovach (2009), Fiddler, (2014), Makosis (2008), and Wilson (2008) truly shaped how this research came together. The methodology for this thesis employs a similar structure described in Kovach (2009); uses metaphor as a way to think about research (Fiddler, 2012; Kovach, 2009); employs qualitative methods that are consistent with beliefs and values of Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing (Makosis, 2008; Fiddler, 2012; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). The methodology involved a way of coming to know the role of culture broker in cross-cultural work through my personal experiences of drumming and singing with the *Oskayak* drumming circle.

According to Kovach (2009) Indigenous methodologies, comprises a holistic understanding of research as a way to gather knowledge by *tâpwê* or truth and trust, which is established through relationships with the community, the created order, and the spirit world. Wilson (2008), Kovach (2008) and others suggest that the researcher becomes a keeper of the knowledge that is entrusted to them by the community. The researcher is accountable to, and is held to account by, the community on several grounds: for the integrity of the work; for the appropriate and respectful handling of sacred knowledge; for the respectful representation of epistemology and the community; for speaking truth; for the ways the research is shared and used; and for his or her ethical conduct (Ermine, 2007; Fiddler, 2014; McIvor, 2010).

Kovach (2006; 2009) described how her approach to methodology was grounded in *Nehiyaw Kiskêyihtamowin* (Plains Cree Knowledges) as having the following characteristics: (a)

researcher preparation; (b) research preparation; (c) decolonizing and ethics; (d) gathering knowledge; (e) making meaning; and (f) giving back to the community. Kovach (2009) used the metaphor of the hunt to illustrate how the six characteristics of research come together in a tribal methodology grounded in *Nehiyaw Kiskêyihtamowin*. While my research is not grounded in *Nehiyaw Kiskêyihtamowin*, it is informed by teachings I received from Nehiyaw Elders and is guided by Nehiyaw an Elder and Knowledge Keeper.

Fiddler (2014) likened stages of “mosahkina wihkaskwa” (*Nehiyaw* for sweetgrass gathering) to steps in Indigenous research methodology. These stages include: (1) preparation to gather; (2) asking for guidance and permission from trusted sources; (3) following proper protocols such as Tobacco offering and considering the ethics; (4) the actual collection of sweetgrass; (5) sorting the sweetgrass by size; (6) ensuring that everything that is collected goes together; (7) storing the sweetgrass and sharing it with those who needed it; (8) ensuring that the sweetgrass is used properly for the wellbeing of the community.

Following Fiddler (2014)’s metaphor of Sweetgrass gathering, I used a drumming metaphor to shape, to guide, and to frame their approaches to research. After discussions with Elder Mary Lee and Knowledge Keeper Delvin Kanewiyakiho, I structured my framework after Kovach’s example (2009) to include ceremony, researcher preparation, *tâpwê*, ethics through the giving of tobacco, ways to gathering knowledge, interpretation, presentation, and giving back to the community. I employed two qualitative methods, semi-structured interview and modified grounded theory, as tools to gather and to interpret knowledge respectively but my findings were presented as reflective commentaries, which was consistent with Kovach (2009) and Makosis’ (2008) approaches to presentation.

Selection of Participants

I chose the participants for this study based on my prior relationships with them. All of the participants have been involved in the PSSC from its inception to its conclusion. All participants have been involved in education or science education in some capacity: Mr. Dean Elliott as Ministry consultant; Mary Lee, resident Elder at *Oskayak* High School; Dr. Glen Aikenhead as Professor Emeritus from the University of Saskatchewan; and Knowledge Keeper Delvin Kanewiyakiho as teacher and currently, as First Nations and Métis consultant for Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS).

The two non-Aboriginal participants were selected for their experience, insight and roles during the PSSC. Dean Elliott, curriculum writer for the Ministry of Education, initiated and managed the project along with his director, Jerry Craswell. The science resources were based on the curriculum he wrote. Although Dean has worked with Aboriginal people, his background in science is rooted in a Eurocentric experience of learning. I am intrigued to learn the contribution he thinks culture brokers made to this project. Glen is an expert on cross-cultural science teaching. He has authored many published articles about culture brokers and border crossings. Moreover, he has had extensive experiences working with Aboriginal peoples, particularly the Dëne people, in science education.

The two Aboriginal participants, Elder Mary Lee and Knowledge Keeper Delvin Kanewiyakiho, are my Nehiyaw teachers. Mary and Delvin have been cultural advisors and member of Aboriginal advisory group for the PSSC since its beginning in 2007. Both individuals, having extensive knowledge about Nehiyaw culture, language, epistemology, protocol, and ceremony, guide this research. Moreover, I would suggest that both Mary and Delvin, being educators and cultural advisors, have performed as culture brokers many times

throughout their lives. I think their experiences and insights provide an Indigenous lens through which an assessment of culture broker is foundational.

Drumming as metaphor for Indigenous Methodology

In subsequent sections I use the metaphor of the drum to understand and to describe how I research with Indigenous people. This study uses the metaphor of drumming to describe (a) preparing to research; (b) gathering knowledge; (c) making meaning; and (d) making a contribution to the community. Drumming and singing in *Nehiyaw* culture share many characteristics with Indigenous research methodology. First, there is gathering to drum, which is preparation that involves learning the skills and structure of songs, knowing one's place in the drumming circle, and getting permission to sing by offering tobacco. Secondly, there is the aspect of gathering knowledge and skill, in which drum circles hone their skills at singing and drumming. With experience they develop their styles and expand their repertoire of songs. In a similar way to making meaning in research, drumming groups learn to interpret the songs of other drumming circles in their own way and eventually develop their own styles and compositions. Lastly, drum circles make a contribution to the community Bringing people together to pray and celebrate.

Gathering to Drum: Preparing to Research

In gathering to drum the drummers prepare themselves for the process of learning. Each time the drumming group gathers, they gather around “Grandfather” drum in a circle. The circle symbolizes the cyclic nature of life, the nature of relationships, and the accountability each drummer has to the each other and to creation (Kanewiyakiho, 2007; Kitwayhat, 2007). A prayer and tobacco are offered. The drum is smudged.

In Indigenous research methodology, just as in gathering to the drum, there is a significant amount of researcher preparation. For Fiddler (2014) the initial research preparation involved a single phase, which involved “preparing, protocols, and permission” (p.54). Kovach (2009), on the other hand, divided the preparatory phase of her research framework into two distinct parts: researcher preparation and research preparation.

One part, researcher preparation, involves the necessary “culture catalyst activities” that a researcher undertakes to prepare for the research. Cultural catalyst activities consist of undertaking ceremony, seeking the advice of trusted advisor such as Elders, and asking for permission through protocols (Kovach, 2009). In centering practices, called “‘miskasowin’ which means to go to the center of yourself to find your own belonging” (Kovach, 2009; p. 49). Researchers become attuned to the inner self called “inward knowing” (Kovach, 2009). This process is a way to access intuitive knowledge through dreams, ceremony, or prayer. Kovach (2009) suggested that researchers may wish to use a dream journal to write down any insights that may come from dreams.

Research preparation, the second part, entails an understanding of the topic at hand and the selection of culturally appropriate research methods that are consistent with Aboriginal epistemology (Kovach, 2009). Kovach (2009) described this process as “talking with other Indigenous researchers about Indigenous researchers...selecting participants, methods for gathering knowledge, interpretation and *tâpwê* (truth and trust)” (p. 51). Fiddler (2014) explained that in this preparatory stage it is crucial to seek the guidance from trusted people such as university faculty advisors, wisdom-keepers, Elders, members, and leaders of the Aboriginal community.

In preparing myself for research I sought guidance from Elder Mary Lee and Knowledge Keeper Delvin Kanewiyakiho, and offered them tobacco and gifts. They advised me to seek Creator's help and guidance in the Sweat lodge, and to offer tobacco and cloth. In late September of 2015, I went to Delvin's family Sweat on Little Pine First Nation, brought tobacco tied in white and green cloth, and shared my intentions with the people gathered in the Sweat Lodge. During the research process I smudged myself and all necessary equipment before I gather knowledge, make meaning, or share any research findings. I asked them also if they would agree to be participants, and would offer them tobacco accordingly. I asked that they give me advise on ways that I might give back to the community.

Learning to Drum: Gathering Knowledge

Learning to drum and gathering knowledge are processes whereby the learners acquire knowledge that can be interpreted. In each process cultural knowledge is shared and from that, meaning is deduced, ingested, and transformed.

In Indigenous research methodology, there are many methods such as sharing circles and symbol-based research method (Fiddler, 2014; Lavallée, 2009) or conversational story-telling method (Kovach, 2010) that may be appropriate for research with Aboriginal people; however, this research will utilize the semi-structured interview method (Struthers, 2001) because the main focus of the study concerns the perspectives of Elders and Knowledge Keeper. Methods vary, they may be conversational or strictly structured. Nevertheless, this study will use a semi-structured interview method because it provides a framework for the interviewer but simultaneously offers the flexibility to query a respondent more deeply (Gall et. al., 2006). That flexibility also allows for a relaxed conversational style, which gives the respondent some leeway to guide the flow and the direction of the interview; thus Elders have some autonomy to

direct the course of the interview, thereby negotiating their boundaries within the ethical space. The interview questions are necessary to guide my conversations, however my approach, conversational in style, was flexible enough that in some cases, participants could speak freely about other topics.

Conversational style methods used as a research tool mirror many Indigenous forms of learning in many cultures. In Australia, for example, one way indigenous women teach each other was through story telling called yarning. Walker, Fredericks, Mills and Anderson (2013) used yarning as a research method as a way to involve Australian Aboriginal women in health research. In research with Nyoongah people, Bessarab and Ng'andu (2010) used the Yarning as informal “oral conversation or written conversations” (p.38) to establish relationships. Kovach (2010) contended that conversational methods align with Indigenous research methodologies because these approaches acknowledge Aboriginal ways of learning and oral tradition.

In the conversational method, the researcher and participant are in a relationship requiring trust (Kovach, 2010). Kovach (2010) stated, “for the conversational method, the relational factor – that I knew participants and they knew me – was significant” (p. 46). The relational component of conversational method requires a greater level of trust. Findings are richer and areas, not normally assessable to strangers, are shared with the researcher. However, Kovach (2010) argued that the researcher must be perceived to be highly trustworthy and must possess credibility with the participants.

Unlike strictly structured Western approaches such as the interview method, Kovach (2009) explained that traditional Indigenous ways of gathering knowledge as conversation provides four main benefits. First, there is flexibility from time constraints and formality, which allows the speaker to express themselves freely and to give the necessary context for their words.

Second, by sharing either directly or indirectly, Aboriginal participants are able to shape their answers more fully in relation to the seeker's question. Third, as the focus shifts away from the questioning, the researcher must listen intently, refrain from interrupting, and makes his or her own interpretations. Fourth, the method allows a co-creative process in which the researcher both learns the participant's narrative and is invited into "reflexivity in research" (Kovach, 2010, p. 100) in which the researcher draws upon an "inward knowing", or intuition to discover meaning in the narrative for him or herself.

Interpreting the Songs: Making Meaning

Several Aboriginal scholars have used multiple qualitative methods in their research framework that align with Aboriginal epistemology (Kovach, 2009; Fiddler, 2014; Makosis, 2008; & Wilson, 2008). Kovach (2009) suggested, "some Indigenous researchers have incorporated a mix-method approach that offers both interpretive meaning-making and some form of thematic analysis" (p.131). Kovach and Indigenous scholars have maintained that as long as analytic methods are consistent with an Indigenous framework's epistemic position, the use of other qualitative methods as tools of analysis adds to the study's rigor and is completely acceptable. Both Fiddler (2014) and Kovach (2009), for example, used a form of thematic analysis in their research. When Kovach chose to use thematic analysis in her discourse, she was conscious that such an approach still had to be guided by the ethics, ontology, and epistemology of Indigenous methodology.

Fiddler (2014) looked to the *mosahkina wihkaskwa* (Sweetgrass gathering) metaphor for as a way to understand how to make meaning of knowledge. There was no contradiction in her use of thematic analysis because this approach was consistent with the process of gathering Sweetgrass. She argued that as Sweetgrass has to be sorted, trimmed, matched up by size, and

then woven into strands, knowledge from research is similarly sorted, “cut and analyzed” (p.65) using a thematic analysis approach.

By the same token, the metaphor of learning to sing and to drum was my way to make meaning from participant data in this study. In any song, words, lines, or notes are only snippets but when they are taken together, the listener draws out a song’s mood, narrative, themes, and patterns.

For this study, I used an inductive thematic analysis, to draw out themes and patterns from participant texts. Thematic analysis, broadly speaking, is a process whereby the researcher investigates a text for emerging patterns or themes (Braun & Clark, 2006). The researcher connects ideas within the lines of a texts to shorter descriptions or labels called a “code” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2006; Namey, Guest, Thairu, & Johnson, 2007; Saldana, 2013). “Codes” in thematic analysis play a similar role to musical phrases in a song, connecting music to words to ideas. These codes try to capture the essence of the original idea (Saldaña, 2013).

Thematic analysis may be done through an inductive process (Braun & Clark, 2006). The process is inductive because the patterns, categories, or themes are grounded in and come from the text itself (Patton, 1990). Arguing for an inductive process, Patton (1980) maintained that “patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis” (p. 306). Codes that denote ideas within a transcript, contribute to an emerging theme when they are considered in the context of other themes, larger emerging patterns, or within the text as a whole. Only after these lines are considered in context can readers infer and interpret their own meaning.

As a tool of analysis and in the context of the drumming metaphor, thematic analysis is appropriate several reasons. First, the use of an inductive approach is suitable because it does not

operate by imposing prior ideas, suppositions, or hypotheses onto the data; instead the researcher tries to understand the patterns and themes found within the text. The method respects forms of traditional learning, in which every learner is expected to find their own meaning in an Elder's teachings. Indigenous scholars maintained that as long as analytic methods are consistent with Indigenous epistemologies, the use of qualitative methods in the process of analysis adds to the study's rigor and is completely acceptable. Using a qualitative method is considered appropriate if the chosen methods respect and aligns with culture and values (Fiddler, 2014; Kovach, 2009; Lavallée, 2009; Wilson, 2008). Secondly, practitioners who are using an inductive process are encouraged to be open to "serendipitous information and insights that might arise from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015); this is consistent with many Aboriginal methods, which suggest that intuition is a valuable source of knowledge (Fiddler, 2014; Kovach, 2008; Wilson, 2008).

In this study, after I obtained the data from each participant, the data was transcribed. Each participant reviewed their transcripts to their satisfaction. Then, I performed a line by line analysis for each transcript. Each line was coded for meaning. Similar lines were formed together to form codes and sub-themes (Braun & Clark, 2006). From sub-themes, themes emerged. The process of coding also crisscrossed between themes since each line of text may contain more than one meaning and could generate other themes. In the end, the process was not linear nor as clean as is presented in Table 1.1. I coded each transcript twice with similar results. Delvin, Glen, Dean, and Elder Mary's transcripts yielded roughly 60, 65, 85, and 45 themes respectively. Some very interesting sub-themes or patterns included (1) *Oskâpêwis as a viable culture broker in dialogue with non-Aboriginal people*, (2) *necessity and significance protocols in dialogue with Aboriginal people*, (3) *reflexivity of culture brokers*, (4) *openness to culture*, (5) *lack of distinct ways to identify culture brokers among pre-service teachers*, and (6) *role of culture broker in*

redressing issues of power. Some of these sub-themes were so distinct, they could stand alone. For example, some themes such as *Oskâpêwis as viable culture broker* could not be merged with concepts such as the *culture broker as buffer*. However, like sub-themes with similar meanings were combined together. Themes such as *protocols*, *Oskâpêwis as culture broker*, and *culture broker as liaison* were collapsed together to derive an overarching theme; in this example, it was an understanding of Oskâpêwis' role as liaison.

Each transcript was considered on its own and sub-themes of each transcript were used to produce roughly several main themes and in turn each of those themes were woven together to form an overarching-theme or a teaching⁷. In the last part of my analysis, I reflected on each of the respective teachings generated from each transcript. I noted similarities between them but kept them distinct. For instance, an over-arching theme or teaching that arose from Delvin's transcript such as *Oskâpêwis, the cultural helper and culture broker-liaison* was kept separate from theories arising from Glen's transcripts such as *culture broker as reflexive practitioner*. I used the teachings of each transcripts as I reflected on the findings of this study. These are discussed in detail in the reflective commentaries, which are presented in chapter 4. From these reflective teachings, I reported four significant findings. Some findings such as two-eyed seeing, arose from intuition after a second conversation with Glen Aikenhead to clarify his ideas about reflexivity. Other findings, such as the significant role that *Oskâpêwisak* played in the PSSC as culture brokers arose from the comments participants provided in their interviews. The findings, thus are my thoughts and reflections, based and grounded in the theories drawn from each transcript.

⁷ I used the term "teaching" as way to decolonize terminology. I suggest that themes when taken together, especially if they are ideas, words, or culture meanings given by an Elder, represent a cultural teaching.

These four findings are discussed in chapter five. In summary they are: (1) there was a greater understanding of local ways of knowing, culture, and protocol for significant cross-cultural exchange with Aboriginal people; (2) findings suggested that *oskâpêwisak* (Elders' helpers) were engaged in significant culture brokerage during the PSSC; (3) reflexivity, the ability to detach and to grasp how features of cultures affect one's worldview, is a vital trait that all culture brokers have and need in order to engage in dialogue; (4) culture brokers who are reflexive develop the ability for two-eyed seeing.

Table 1.1

Inductive thematic analysis process

Lines from the text	Sub-themes	Overarching theme	Teaching
liaison between the community and the Elder that is of interest to perform or facilitate that ceremony I do the footwork on behalf of the principal and I get everything ready and set everything up so that the ceremony happens in a good way and to make sure that the ceremonial person is honoured in the right way with tobacco. I saw both my mother and father role-model protocol and in a way to facilitate ceremony so it's important to do this because we	Culture broker as liaison Protocols Ceremony Truth and	As a cultural liaison, culture broker this is Delvin's function: (1) Liaise between the Elders and school (2) Provide the components, teachings, equipment and supplies needed for the ceremony (3) Ensures that schools follow protocol. (4) Done is a good way (Tâpwê). Establish truth and trust Protocols, ways of handling sacred knowledge, is necessary to establish truth and trust, relationships Cultural celebrations and ceremony are integral processes to the cultural broker's role.	<i>Oskâpêwisak</i> , cultural helper with a knowledge of protocol acting in the role of culture broker acts as a liaison and facilitates, ceremony and dialogue between any two parties, such as the school community and the wider Aboriginal Community.

<p>still have our Indigenous ways of knowing. We still have our epistemology and we have our pedagogy as well because we teach through ceremony</p> <p>If you know the protocol and you understand how to approach Elders or knowledge keepers or anyone that you're asking help from, if you are approaching that person in a sacred manner with tobacco in hand with the intention to get help and you know how to do that and to build relationship\ trust with that person, then you can be a broker, Indigenous or not.</p> <p>We teach through these ways of knowing that are presented through ceremony and cultural celebrations</p>	<p>Trust (Tâpwê)</p> <p>Pedagogy</p>	<p><i>Oskâpêwisak</i> learn from mentors. Cultural practices and knowledge is passed down through modeling and teachings</p> <p>Role modeling Indigenous ways of knowing, ceremony.</p> <p><i>Oskâpêwisak</i> learn through observing. Culture broker\ <i>oskâpêwisak</i> connection.</p>	
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Presenting the Findings: Reflective Commentary

To represent the findings from this research I employed reflective commentary since it is a research method that is consistent with Indigenous methodology. Reflective commentary respects the holism and traditional way that knowledge is transmitted (Kovach, 2009). Makosis (2008) also employed personal self-reflection to present her understanding of the findings since

this method aligned closely with her values, her culture, and the values of her participants.

Makosis (2008) stated

because my methodology was created outside the Euro Western framework and employed a methodology founded on Nehiyaw thought, the interpretation of the data will be seen and interpreted through the lens of Nehiyaw teachings understood as Nehiyaw pimatisiwin (Cree worldview-Cree Way of Life) (p.58).

Personal reflection, she argued, is “a means of respecting, honoring and giving voice to the participants’ willingness to share their knowledge of the subject area” (Makosis, 2008, p.131).

Makosis (2008) further justified her choice of analytical method this way, “I chose personal self-reflection as the ‘data analysis method’ because it is what we learn from our life experiences and stories told to us that constitute knowledge or a learning formation” (p. 131).

In reflective commentary Kovach (2009) suggested that researchers capture the essence of participant’s idea without changing its integrity or meaning. The method does not attempt to control the subjectivity of participant’s commentary (Kovach, 2009). Rather the researcher reflects on the narrative conversation with each participant and identifies relevant insights and findings that are significant to the research. Then the researcher presents the insights and knowledge that he or she gleans from each conversation in the form of a reflection.

To ensure the accuracy of reflective commentaries the researcher must verify his or her interpretation with the participant who is able to review and makes changes (Kovach, 2008; Lavallée, 2009; Makosis, 2008). In addition, the researcher also provides a condensed version of the conversational narrative so that readers are given freedom to identify their own particular insights and to draw their own conclusions. A method such as reflective commentary is subject to criticism because they do not attempt to control participant or researcher subjectivity and bias.

However, these perspectives and biases are acknowledged and contextualized but, perhaps most importantly, the use of reflection and reflective commentaries respect traditional values of holism, relationship, context-based learning, and respect for individual interpretation.

Singing as Serving a Community: Giving Back to the Community

I mentioned earlier that drumming circles give back to the community in both tangible and intangible ways. Through mentorship many experienced drummers mentor younger ones. Thus they preserve cultural knowledge and oral tradition through their music. They engender a pride in culture. In a spiritual way their music is prayer. For Fiddler (2014), giving back to community acknowledges *Nehiyaw* ethics of reciprocity, relationships, and respect. Participants in Fiddler's study were given gifts, offered tobacco, and provided an opportunity to share what they learned. This provided closure for her project. Kovach (2009) stated, "giving back does not only mean dissemination of findings; it means creating a relationship through the entirety of the research" (p.149). Makosis' (2008) identified the Natural Laws of *mahtahitowin* (*Nehiyaw* for sharing) in her own, which led her to suggest that acts of sharing knowledge between people must be open and transparent. Considering Kovach (2009), Makosis (2008), and Fiddler's (2014) examples, giving back to the community takes on a relational and spiritual significance.

I suggest that there are two aspects of *mahtahitowin* to honour in my study. One aspect involves the sharing of my research findings; the other involves relationship. To fulfill the first aspect of giving back to the community Delvin and Mary suggested that I bring food, and participate in a last Sweat to conclude the project, and share with the people of Little Pine First Nation what knowledge I have learned from this research journey.

Second, with respect to sharing findings and making a contribution to pedagogy, I believe the results from this research might benefit different stakeholders in Aboriginal education in our

province. A study which explores the significance of culture brokers in intercultural dialogue in the context of collaboration and ethical space, and which aims to describe the characteristics, their dispositions, attributes, and skills, has the potential to identify these qualities in pre-service teachers, tenured teachers, and school based leaders.

To give back to the community, I propose a collaboration with Aboriginal leaders in my school division and with other educational institutions (1) to develop ways to identify and to foster potential cultural brokers among pre-service teachers, tenured teachers and school leaders; and (2) to create programs and networks which would allow these individuals to bridge culture and learning for their colleagues and students. The aim of these programs would be to increase understanding and awareness around the significance of cultural protocols, and to help teachers understand how healthy intercultural dialogue and collaboration might produce cultural opportunities for the authentic inclusion of Aboriginal ways of knowing, being, and doing in their own practices.

Tâpwê and ethical considerations

The engagement of Aboriginal people in research necessitates an understanding of “sacred space” as it relates to relationships and the limits of those relationships that are established between, and imposed by the researcher and the participant (Ermine, 2007). For Ermine (2007) sacred spaces are “personal autonomous zones” (p.195) that each individual circumscribes for themselves that must remain inviolable; they are delimited by personal, ethical, and cultural boundaries to which researchers in privileged positions must readily accede. The observance of traditional protocols is one way that cultural ethics delimits the sacred space within the researcher-participant relationship.

According to Aboriginal Ethics Work Group [AEWG] (n.d.) guidelines, “when a researcher seeks knowledge from an Elder [or any other Aboriginal Knowledge Keeper or cultural advisor], the researcher must offer tobacco or other appropriate gifts to symbolize that you are accepting the ethical obligations that go with receiving knowledge” (p. 10). Through the observance of protocols, the researcher assumes responsibility to the Elder, to the Knowledge Keeper, and to the community for any traditional knowledge they receive (Ermine et. al. 2004). Also, researchers must undertake the reasonable remuneration for Elders’ costs such as expenses for travel or accommodations (Aboriginal Ethics Work Group, n.d.). Researchers have the obligation to discuss the ramifications of any research that would portray Aboriginal people negatively, may harm the reputation of Aboriginal people or may promote harmful stereotypes. These protocols commit both parties to a relationship for which they both have responsibilities.

To honor the sacred space in the Elder-community-researcher relationship, and to acknowledge my accountability to the *personal* relationship that I have with Elder Mary Lee and Knowledge Keeper Delvin Kanewiyakio, I acknowledge the ethical boundaries delimited by traditional protocols. Therefore, I offer Tobacco and gifts. I seek and follow Mary and Delvin’s guidance. I provide all participants opportunities for critical engagement at all stages of the research process and I accede to publish only the findings that the participants and I mutually determine to be acceptable.

Also, I have sought the counsel of Aboriginal Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Aboriginal school division leaders to ascertain that this project is consistent with the beliefs and the wishes of the community, and to determine the effect that my research may have for Aboriginal education across our school division; although, our division leaders do not speak, or claim to speak on behalf of the Aboriginal community, their guidance helped me consider how

my research will affect Aboriginal people. I relate a personal story of *tâpwê* in the previous section to illustrate this point.

Research with Aboriginal people that is done with *tâpwê* honors relational accountability through cultural protocols (Wilson, 2008). Yet, there is another set of ethical guidelines that is consistent with cultural ethics that I must also observe. In the following paragraphs I outline how this thesis will also proceed in accordance with the guidelines established by University of Saskatchewan's Aboriginal Ethics Working Group (AEWG) on research with Aboriginal people and University of Saskatchewan (U of S) ethics guidelines; the latter document describes the treatment of non-Aboriginal participants.

As with Aboriginal participants, it is crucial that non-Aboriginal participants are accorded the same respect and consideration, although I will not provide them with an offering of tobacco. Thus, it is appropriate to discuss the ethics that pertains to all participants here. According to U of S (2008) guidelines, all participants must fully and freely give their consent in writing. All participants will be advised that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. They will be advised of their rights to retain anonymity and confidentiality.

Lastly, another issue of ethics concerns the protection of traditional epistemologies. This principle is consistent with the tenet of ethical space because it recognizes the Aboriginal community's ownership over the cultural knowledge (AEWG, n.d.; Ermine, 2007) and prevents misappropriation and devaluation of cultural knowledge (Martin, 2012). According to the Recommendations for Ethical Research with Indigenous People- Draft (University of Saskatchewan [U of S], 2008), Aboriginal people have the right to their cultural and intellectual property. Thus Aboriginal participants will have a voice in deciding how any results from this

research that relate to Aboriginal ways of knowing and that affect Aboriginal people, shall be used.

Personal Experiences of *Tâpwê*

In Indigenous research, choices of methods and topics must align with the ethics and beliefs of the community (Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). For me *tâpwê* (truth and trust) (Kovach, 2009) best describes the ethical and relational considerations in Indigenous research. My personal background included in the prologue and throughout this thesis tried to contextualize my relationships with the Aboriginal community to explain how I am positioned to research with Aboriginal people and to describe the relational accountability that I have to the Aboriginal community (Wilson, 2008). In the literature review and in the beginning of this chapter I explored the ethics and the decolonizing work of Indigenous research in greater detail; however, I felt it is appropriate to describe a personal example of *tâpwê* here.

At the beginning of this research journey I had an earlier idea for a study that sought Elder's views on curricula. When I consulted with the Aboriginal leaders of my school division, the early proposal was carefully considered. However, I was advised not to pursue that line of research because they felt that it was not my place to ask those questions. While they were not concerned that I might misuse the knowledge from that research, they were particularly concerned about how knowledge from that kind of research may be exploited. Moreover, the research idea raised many implications: Which Aboriginal voice or Nation would be represented? Which teachings would be included? Which Elders would I choose? Would this research mislead some people to think that the teachings of a few Elders represent the voice of an entire Nation? These questions describe issues of ethics and raise debate about the kinds of

knowledge that can be collected; they concern the relational accountability that researchers have for the community.

Based on the wisdom of these leaders, I chose another topic, one that met with their approval and the approval of Mary and Delvin. Work that proceeds without *tâpwê* and without regard for the people it is intended to serve, promotes an intellectual colonization (Battiste, 2012; Kovach, 2009). I included this story to help non-Aboriginal people understand and learn that in Indigenous research, there must be respect for the concerns and the wishes of members of the community.

Summary

Out of necessity, out of respect for my Aboriginal participants, and because I am not Indigenous, I employed a methodological framework that is based on Kovach (2009), Fiddler (2014), Makosis (2008) and Wilson (2008). Their work inspired a methodological approach that draws on my personal experiences of learning to drum with the *Oskayak* drum group. My approach followed similar stages of research preparation, gathering, interpreting, and presenting knowledge, and giving back to the community, yet the approach also employed qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews and grounded theory to gather and to interpret knowledge. I made a case for their use, describing how these methods align with and respect Aboriginal epistemologies. Exploring literature on decolonizing approaches to research, in my way I tried to decolonize my own work by using language that respects Indigenous cultures, by situating myself in the context of learning from Aboriginal people, by using Indigenous terminology where possible, and by challenging my own assumptions to better understand ways that I am influenced by a Eurocentric education. Although I outlined the cultural and the researcher preparation that I undertook, and I justified the research tools that I employed to

gather and interpret knowledge in this chapter, my interpretations are presented as reflective commentaries in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FO

Reflective Commentaries

Introduction

In this chapter I present the knowledge I gathered through conversations with four participants involved in the Pearson Saskatchewan Science Collaboration (PSSC). I employed an Indigenous metaphor, *coming to learn to drumming and singing*, as a means to come to know and to learn about the research journey. From participant transcripts I employed grounded analysis to seek themes, concepts, and theories contained within each interview. These are themes, patterns, and ideas that emerge from my interview with them are my only interpretation of them. However, I ensured that themes arising from each interview were grounded in the lines of each text by performing a line by line comparative analysis, a technique called “compare and contrast”. Lines of texts that connected to others formed a picture of the culture broker, or a theory of the culture broker. However, instead of calling the major ideas arising from my conversations with each participant “theories”, I choose to call them teachings.

I respect the teachings of each participant and chose to present each theme, concept, and theory individually. Taken together, the lines of each text form patterns, and these subsequently become a teaching. Finally, when I consider each participant’s teachings together, I form my own understanding of the culture broker in the context of work with Aboriginal people in the context of the PSSC, which is discussed in the conclusion.

A Reflective Commentary on my Conversation with Glen Aikenhead

Dr. Glen Aikenhead has spent the better part of his career researching the interrelationship of science and Indigenous knowledge. In the late 90’s, Glen authored and co-authored several papers on the role of teachers as culture brokers and the significance of

Aboriginal Knowledge in science education. In particular, he was interested in ways that minority and Indigenous students manage border crossings from their respective cultures into the culture of science. Because of his extensive background, I looked forward to learning his perspective about the role and contributions that culture brokers had in the development of *Pearson Saskatchewan Science* textbooks.

Glen's nuanced explanation of the culture broker led to a very complex teaching about the role of culture broker in the PSSC. His initial portrayal of the culture broker was in-line with many descriptions in the literature, comparable to Michie (2011) or Szazs (2001). The culture broker is an individual who mediates a cultural crossing and transition for another person of a disparate culture. The nature and role of culture broker is wide ranging and highly context dependent. Needs that compel people to seek the services of a culture broker may vary widely and thus, make each instance of culture brokerage highly context-dependent and distinctive. Some instances of culture brokerage are superficial while other experiences of border crossing are extended and critical and require a culture broker with a greater degree of skill, knowledge, and experience.

The range of brokerage may be at the surface level, such as introducing family to another culture as in Glen's granddaughter's first introduction to a powwow, to a much deeper exposure to culture, such as seeking help from an Elder through ceremony. Depth of cultural brokerage is determined by the culture broker's experiences with and immersion in the particular cultures engaged in dialogue, the culture broker's ability to convey knowledge, and to mediate cross-cultural exchanges between these parties. As a result, the effective culture broker must continually learn about the people he serves and adjust to their needs, and the context of the situation.

Culture brokers are recognized by the communities they work with as a “knowledgeable outsider”. According to Glen, the “knowledgeable outsider” is an individual accepted by both cultural groups as having sufficient first-hand knowledge about these cultures. The knowledgeable outsider is continually learning about the other culture and strives to add to that knowledge. To illustrate, Glen spoke of his experiences with Y’upik Elder Oscar Kawagley, a highly respected Aboriginal science educator. During a conference they attended together, Elder Oscar disclosed to Glen his astonishment at the number of *Nehiyaw* and *Nakawē* attendees who rose for the sunrise pipe ceremony. The *Y’upik* Elder regarded Glen as a knowledgeable outsider with first hand experiences of plains First Nations cultures. He accepted Glen’s explanation for the cultural significance of a dawn pipe ceremony.

A very significant, and for me, central characteristic of the culture broker, reflexivity, emerged from our discussion regarding the culture broker. In general terms, reflexivity is defined as the ability for self-examination or a bending-back upon one’s ideas, experiences, or views (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2011; Martin, 2012; Tomaselli, Dyll, & Francis, 2008). The process of bending back towards oneself involves a critical self-examination of one’s pre-suppositions and beliefs about people of cultures, especially people whose cultural differences, morale, norms, laws, and values are significantly different than one’s own. This is a trait that I had not seen closely connected to or mentioned in the literature on culture brokerage.

Glen argued passionately that culture brokers must have the ability to be critically reflexive. Throughout our discussion, he often returned to this notion and therefore, I noted its significance. In Glen’s view reflexivity is an ability to be self-critical and reflective about beliefs, ideas, prejudice, and suppositions that are inculcated by cultural forces from infancy. The culture broker must be able to understand and appreciate the impact that these beliefs, suppositions may

have on relationships with people from other cultures. Knowing their impact, the culture broker may need to check and suspend their own worldviews in order to learn from other cultures. Glen elaborated,

What a lot of what you understand in your own culture, as a culture broker, you would also have to answer the question, how would I know that? What beliefs are pre-suppositions and we have to treat them as that, rather than absolute truth. And so, the culture broker in his or her own culture would have to understand their own culture, to understand the cultural features of it and to recognize it as a culture.

The ability to be reflexive allows culture brokers to realize that aspects of their belief systems are not absolute, but are constructed. Accepting these constructions of realities as absolute truths may prevent or limit how much the culture broker may come to know another culture. Through the ability for reflexivity, the culture broker realizes how cultural features of his or her own culture affect how they see, judge, think about, and react to other cultures (Martin, 2012; Tomaselli, Dyll, & Francis, 2008). Glen argued:

It's as if someone can put their own belief system on hold in order to listen to someone else's belief system in order to understand it.

To better understand and appreciate the truths of another culture, their ways of knowing, and ways of being, culture brokers must be able suspend their own personal beliefs, worldviews, and ideas thereby reducing the risk of dismissing the other cultural perspective altogether.

In a follow up conversation, after our interview, Glen Aikenhead suggested to me that the notion of reflexivity has a connection to an Indigenous metaphor of two-eyed seeing. Being critically reflexive, a culture broker's experiences with other ways of knowing, also has them examining their own. M'igma Elder Albert Marshall, who conceived of this metaphor, explained

that two-eyed seeing is “learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing and from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing and to using both of these eyes together” (Hatcher, Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall, 2009; p. 146). With one eye, a learner grasps the strengths offered by Indigenous ways of knowing and simultaneously, with the other eye, a learner sees how Western ways of knowing may complement an Indigenous understanding (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2007; Hatcher, Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall; King, 2012).

Martin (2012) argued that, “two-eyed seeing stresses the importance of being mindful of alternative ways of knowing (multiple epistemologies) in order to constantly question and reflect on the partiality of one’s perspective” (p. 31). Glen suggested that, “two-eyed seeing may result in (1) parallel enculturation if that is what the student wants; (2) acculturation; but not assimilation because the Indigenous knowledge would be rejected in that case. The latter happens when an Indigenous person takes on a Euro-Canadian perspective at the expense of their Indigenous knowledge even though they preferred not to” (personal communication, Aikenhead, 2016). At the very least, culture brokers must be able to deeply considers other cultures without feeling threatened by them. Beyond that, they must have the ability to truly consider the worth of the other culture in light of a self-examination of one’s own, hence exhibiting reflexivity (Bartlett et al.; Martin, 2012). A culture broker who is reflexive and can see with an eye into each of the disparate cultures, is likely to be more successful at helping the respective cultures gain understanding.

From our interview, Glen suggested that to gain a sense of reflexivity, one had to understand how it feels to be an outsider, to feel powerless and to know the cultural limitations that would be imposed on a foreigner. The culture broker would have to appreciate how certain

aspects of culture such as common language, shared belief systems, shared worldviews, and social status privilege the insider who can use these forms of cultural capital to make connections with people and acquire resources far more quickly. Similarly, assumptions about the outsider such as stereotypes and prejudice are barriers to social mobility, access to resources, and acceptance, which creates an imbalance of power. Glen called this concept the asymmetry of power. He explained it this way:

I feel quite strongly that Euro-Canadian protocols are so hidden, so subtle; Westerners don't realize that they are protocols. Somethings when we're being polite, what we're really saying is only fulfilling protocols of politeness. We don't even see them as protocols when communicating between non-Indigenous Canadians and Indigenous people. It's really important to engage Euro-Canadians in protocols. It's because the Indigenous people haven't had an opportunity to deny Euro-Canadian protocols; they've been forced on them in a very dramatic way. The power imbalance between the two cultures is very asymmetrical, privileging the Euro-Canadian. With the asymmetric power, it's very important *to reverse* the power. Protocols are one way of doing it. Some small ways are the way you spell words. Capitalizing "Indigenous," for example. Little things like that make a difference. Someone who is a culture broker is cognizant of those kinds of things.

Some of the Euro-Canadian protocols to which Glen referred, happened during the PSSC. For instance, Elders were expected to meet with us at a certain time and to keep to an agenda. They were expected to work to meet deadlines in their second language. Meetings happened in artificial surroundings that disconnected Aboriginal participants from Mother Earth. The surroundings for the meetings portrayed power and luxury, to which some Elders were

unaccustomed and appeared uncomfortable. Without a critical response to prejudice, barriers, protocols, and suppositions or even an awareness they exist, there cannot be true and safe dialogue for people of the disparate cultures who are expected to engage under the terms of the dominant culture.

The role of the culture broker is then to reverse the imbalance of power so cultures may engage on equal terms. During the PSSC culture brokers attempted to address this imbalance in several ways. One such way was that meetings began with prayer and smudge. Knowledge Keeper and Elders were also acknowledged with tobacco. The PSSC leadership recognized their significance with honoraria and due consideration. Immediate needs, such as transportation and accommodations, were covered to ensure the comfort and care of the Elder's. Glen suggested that Knowledge Keeper Delvin Kanewiyakiho and I had modeled respect for their Indigenous ways of knowing as 'silent culture brokers'. Glen explains,

You certainly facilitated the inclusion of appropriate protocol when you did the drumming at one of the meetings and things like that. It allowed people to see the giving of tobacco for your drumming. In that case, you were a 'silent culture broker' but you set it up so that people learned more about Indigenous cultures and were comfortable with it. In this particular example, "silent culture brokers", meant that we modeled the acceptance of tobacco and smudging of the drum to highlight and to demonstrate the proper importance of protocol. Our song and our smudge provided a chance for many people to witness a ceremony, without forcing anyone to smudge or to feel obligated to smudge. These people learned about FNM ceremony and protocol in a safe environment. In Glen's example, Reid McAlpine presented Delvin and me with tobacco so that we could sing for the Elders. After the prayer, we smudged the drum, and we smudged ourselves. We described the song and paid our respects to

the late Simon Kitwayhat, who taught us the songs. We did not give any explicit explanations about the act of giving tobacco until the song was concluded and in that situation, it was Delvin who explained the importance of tobacco offerings to teacher-writers and Pearson staff.

In Glen's view these actions, however small, are ways the culture broker creates a safe place which Glen called 'campfire spot of dialogue' (Vickers, 2007). Thus, the role of the culture broker is to facilitate a border crossing where mutual respect is given and where parties can meet on equal terms. The diagram below illustrates this notion. The gray arrows signify the efforts that the culture broker undertakes to reduce the anxiety of border crossing and redress the imbalance of power so that protocols of both cultures can be respected.

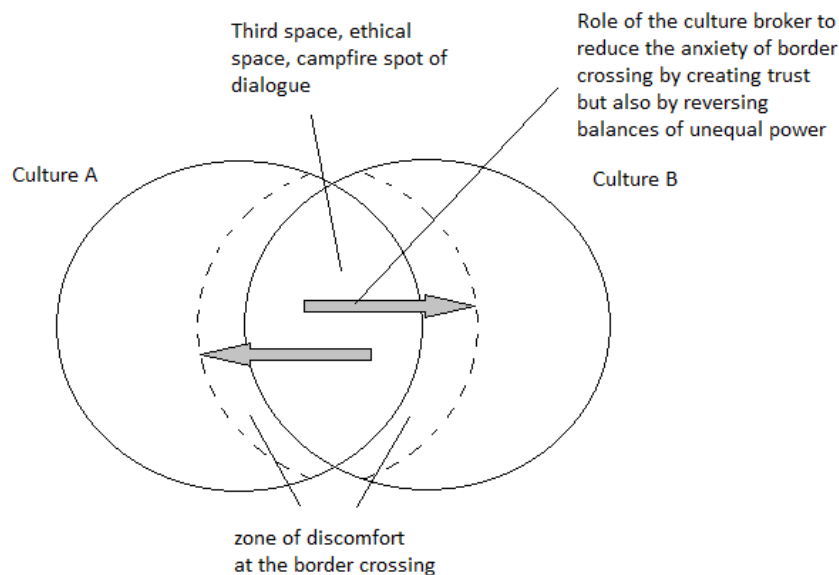


Figure 4.1: The role of the culture broker in the mediation of an ethical space for dialogue by redressing the imbalance of power

As my conversation with Glen continued, he gave an example of an individual within the context of the PSSC who learned to be reflexive, grew to become a culture broker worked, and

finally helped to redress the asymmetry of power. Glen identified Reid McAlpine, publisher for Pearson, as a notable example of someone involved in the PSSC who first learned to become a culture broker, as he was always learning about Aboriginal cultures. Glen explained,

Reid McAlpine, for instance, is an example of someone who had to become a culture broker. He was very clever and open-minded and learned quickly because his heart was in it. At first he wasn't a culture broker but he learned quite quickly. Not far into the project, maybe six months, he was helping his staff understand what was going on. So that when the Pearson people interacted with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, they had a better understanding of what was going on.

In this example, Glen referred to ways that Reid enabled and empowered Pearson personnel to learn and to understand the customs of the Elders, the significance of protocol, and significance of their worldviews. Reid valued the opinions and words of the Elders and explicitly forbade his editors from redacting or editing any of the Elder's final comments or statements in the final textbook. The positioning of Elders and Knowledge Keepers as equals in our dialogues changed the dynamic of these meetings from consultation to collaboration.

In summary, from my conversations with Glen, I realized that the culture broker's most important quality is the ability to critically self-reflect. The efficacy of the culture broker depends on her or his ability to understand their own relative position and cultural frames of reference, and how these affect their relationships and acceptance of other cultures. That is, the culture broker must have the insight to know and to appreciate how his or her worldview, beliefs, cultural practices, and spirituality shape their own pre-suppositions about other peoples and how these affect their interactions with people from disparate cultures. If they understand those elements of culture to be absolutes, then there can be no negotiating other points of view.

The ability for reflexivity moves the culture broker beyond the acceptance of the other diverse cultural views, and simultaneously encourages them to critically explore their own ways of knowing and the other ways of knowing. Through two-eyed seeing, one is encouraged to fully embrace and acknowledge how the strengths that both Indigenous and Western ways of knowing have to give, to acknowledge ways they are different, and to recognize how they may co-exist and complement each other.

From the nature of the culture broker, our conversation turned to a discussion on the role they played during the Pearson Saskatchewan Science Collaboration. Glen spoke of empowerment, the role of protocol, “silent culture brokers”, and reversing imbalances of power. The critical role of the culture broker is to create a space for safe dialogue. Glen spoke of the camp fire spot of dialogue, an Indigenous metaphor that describes a place where two individuals are invited to meet on equal terms (Vickers, 2007). To create that ethical boundary for dialogue, there has to be an observance of protocols to which both sides must adhere. This is an aspect of redressing the imbalance of power.

Since aspects of Western protocols, such as scheduling, agendas, meeting in rooms with four walls, are so pervasive, they are not questioned. In most circumstances Elders and Knowledge Keepers are expected to adhere to these conventions, while often, Indigenous protocols are not observed. The giving of tobacco and gifts, time for meeting, prayer, acknowledging Elders for their wisdom, and their time are protocols that ensured that the PSSC met on more equitable footing. These conditions acknowledge respect for Aboriginal participants. It was the role of the culture broker as “silent culture brokers” to role model these protocols for non-Indigenous participants. Culture brokers empowered Indigenous participants by allowing for more time; by refraining from further redaction of the Elders’ teachings and their

words in the final drafts; and by devoting profiles in the textbook to convey the Elders' voices and teaching. These ways contributed to creating a safe environment for dialogue and thus created the conditions for a successful collaboration.

A Reflective Commentary on my Conversation with Dean Elliott

In my conversation with Dean Elliott on the nature, role and motivation of the culture broker, his definition is very similar to many other answers I had gotten from other participants and from the literature. Dean suggested that the culture broker had to be empathetic, had to have a strong experience of the disparate cultures he or she is helping the other to know, must have a willingness to learn about other cultures and must be respectful of the other cultural group. However, what was unique in Dean's response was this belief:

Part of what makes a good culture broker you have to be open enough and forceful enough to share back, to say, "thank-you for what you were sharing about the environment or your belief in the sacredness of water", or whatever the topic might be, and then we need to share back.

To understand Dean's notion of culture broker, we have to return to the context of the PSSC. During the PSSC, Dean had various roles. Primarily Dean was the Ministry representative in charge of the budget and project manager and later, I think, he tentatively assumed the role of culture broker. He explained:

I think I did somewhat but I don't think that I was [a main] culture broker. I definitely didn't see myself at that role but I certainly saw Glen [Aikenhead] and you, two of the people who talked about Western Science and Indigenous wisdom, knowledge and ways of knowing the most and tried to help the Elders express their ideas in a [scientific way] and vice-versa. I guess my part of it was not so much helping the Elders express what

they know and trying to figure out how that fits with the non-First Nations context. My role was [to direct the project], [knowing that] here's the science we're trying to look at and asking how does that look in a First Nation culture?

During our conversation, Dean expressed his uncertainty about instances where the various roles that he played as project manager and as culture broker overlapped or conflicted. Dean's ambivalence arose because there was always a tension between his role as project manager and culture broker. He felt pressure to advance the project and a reluctance to move ahead until cultural concerns were addressed. He gave this example,

Another example I can think of is the grade nine textbook, when we had two days booked [to develop the book with Elders]. We started on human reproduction and development unit and that's all we got done. I think part of the culture broker role [involved understanding the Elders]. It was very clear that there was unease in the room and that we aren't going to move on in ten to fifteen minutes. We had worked with the Elders long enough to tell that. They weren't answering questions as quickly. They were looking at the floor a lot more and others were saying that they weren't comfortable with where this was going. I don't think the teacher-writers were in a role where they were to defend the curriculum. That was my job... I think that [amongst] Reid [the publisher], Lee [editor], and I, mostly by looks and body language, and a few short statements, quickly readjusted the agenda [to respect the Elder's discomfort], and said that we'll continue all day if we need to and come to it another time. Suddenly it meant [that] a whole lot more money being spent but this was a recognition [that our project] was coming to a good conclusion if the Elders weren't allowed more time to speak and this was a very sensitive topic.

I don't know that if you were to have another group of First Nations people working on a unit like reproduction, [we'd] get that same feeling. I think that we had gotten to know the Elders well enough at that point. Some of them were comfortable in voicing their concerns but sometimes they wouldn't say much. Sometimes we had only one Elder speaking while the others wouldn't say much, and then you knew something wasn't right. They were joking or chiming in. Picking up on that, and by making that change in the agenda, we were keeping in mind that we were there for a purpose and a reason. But all of sudden, how that was to be accomplished had to change.

This example reveals several elements at work in the PSSC. First, it illustrates how the tension between worldviews requires the intervention of culture brokers to be resolved. Second, the issue focuses on the ways the collaboration could meet its goals but simultaneously had addressed the very serious concerns of the Elders. Third, Dean's illustration described time is required to establish trust and significant relationships with the Elders. In the end, the issue of what to include and what could not be included in the final product, was determined by the kinds of teachings that Elders could comfortably share. Dean concluded it took the work of many culture brokers to come to a resolution:

I think sometimes, people are so sensitive to other people's feelings they don't explain what they want out of that interaction that [way] everyone goes away feeling like they didn't get much out of it. I think because we had you, Glen, Brenda in those cultural roles, and we had Reid, Lee and I in a slightly different role but all that combination of different interactions allowed [communication] to happen between the writers and the Elders. The five or six of us, acting as culture brokers or mediators, it was constantly our

jobs to try when someone looked frustrated or confused, to help and try to restate or to ask someone to restate what they meant, ask someone for another opinion.

For, Dean the role of culture broker and the role of project manager had intertwined goals. For him, it meant that the culture broker had to become an active participant in dialogue. In the example above, the culture broker had to have the courage and willingness to share ideas or to engage other people in dialogue, even though the dialogue could be very distressing. Thus, Dean suggested that the culture broker often acted as a buffer for criticism. In the following excerpt of the transcript with my conversation with Dean Elliott, he offers the following explanation:

The other reason you would want culture brokers is that without the culture broker, I think, there isn't [someone] who can take the flack sometimes. In my normal role where I have teachers doing PD on behalf of the ministry and teachers who are receiving that PD, I like to be the broker in between so that if someone is upset, they're upset at me. This way they can interact better with the teacher who is doing the PD. Same thing, we wanted the Elders and the text book writers to have really good connections, so I think we have to be the conduit. Taking flack isn't always a bad thing... It puts you into a triangular relationship. The interaction between the writers and the Elders is linear but if there is friction then it breaks down a bit or the line is cut but it comes through the culture broker. If you think of the relationship as a triangle, then we can help mediate and be the buffer. That's not just to stop things that we think are negative but it could be to get things going. I think sometimes the Elders didn't know what to say to the teacher-writers and the teacher-writers didn't know what to say to the Elders. Whether we knew it or not, our job was to keep things going. It wasn't a meeting of people just to sit and visit; everyone was there because there was a purpose. That's where the culture broker I think helped

achieved that purpose yet separated themselves from it so that the Elders and writers could keep a strong connection.

He described the relationship among the Elders, the culture brokers, and the teacher-writers as triangular. Often, the exchange of information flowed back and forth between, linearly between Elders and teacher-writers. However, in a serious case like the issues we encountered during the reproduction unit in the grade nine science textbook, the culture broker became a third arm of that relationship to divert the flow, to take on the criticism, and to help each side understand the other.

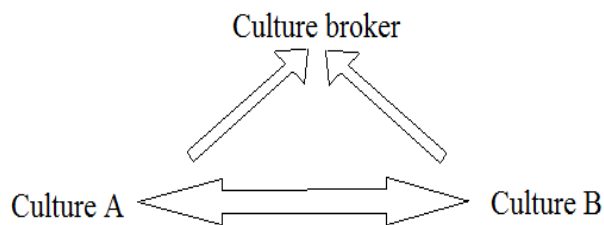


Figure 4. 2: Culture broker as intermediary between culture “A” and “B”

The thicker arrow signifies that most of the dialogue occurs between culture “A” and “B”; The thinner arrows signifies the intervention of the culture broker when need to mediate a potential conflict. Several times, along our journey, Dean suggested that several issues arose that could have stymied the project. Among them was this incident:

The first barrier happened at the very first meeting and just about scuttled the whole projects when the cheques (honoraria for the Elders) weren’t there. There was an interesting part. Even though I have been involved in many projects at the ministry, I often don’t have to deal with the financing side. I made the assumption, obviously incorrectly, that Pearson had worked with Elders but they hadn’t. They didn’t have money for the Elders at that first meeting at the Bessborough; some Elders didn’t have

money to go home. Reid had to take money out of his own personal bank account. Wow, not understanding clearly enough, on our part, what it means to look after the Elders.

I'm very used to meetings where I send out an e-mail to the teachers and teachers know they are supposed to be in Saskatoon on this day for eight thirty. So they know that if they need to come the night before, they book a hotel for the night before but that doesn't work for the Elders where we need to be more involved. In some cases, it might be the ministry's role but for this project, that ended up becoming your role and Brenda's role to ensure that the Elders were taken care of. It became very clear how very important this was.

This incident challenged many assumptions that leadership of the PSSC, held. The incident challenged notions about privilege that is often taken for granted. It challenged pre-suppositions about travel costs, and transportation for Elders to get to the PSSC meetings. Through this experience, Dean, Reid (publisher), and editors realized how important it was that Elders and Knowledge Keepers receive their honoraria in a timely way to pay immediate expenses. These are challenges that required a better response from the PSSC to prevent these future problems. This incident inspired my role and Brenda Green's role to liaise with Elders and to ensure that all their needs were provided for them in a timely fashion.

The complexities of the culture broker role and its very specific nature makes it very difficult to create a program to identify potential culture brokers. Dean, like the other participants agreed that a program to screen potential culture brokers was not viable. Rather, like other participants, Dean suggested that universities and school divisions need to provide pre-service teachers opportunities to be involved in cultural programs in which they would learn from Elders and Knowledge Keepers. In a natural setting, which calls the "Elders' backyards", there would

be opportunities to learn about the natural world from Elders, attend ceremonies, and to develop personal relationships with them. While there are challenges to this kind of program such as logistics, he suggests that these experiences are invaluable to help pre-service teachers to really understand what it means to integrate Aboriginal ways of knowing into their work.

A Reflective Commentary on my Conversation with Delvin Kanewiyakiho

After my conversation with Delvin, I saw that the notion of culture broker from his perspective, is not a label that can be easily applied to anyone nor is it a role that anyone can easily assume. In our conversation I noted many subtleties in his understanding of the notion of culture broker that was not immediately apparent in his initial description. These subtleties describe innate qualities of the culture broker that cannot be easily acquired or taught and are not easily translated into one's practice. Some of these qualities included openness or receptivity or buy-in or acceptance of culture and process of dialogue. In Delvin's words, buy-in is to "believe in the process", to accept or to be open to the culture and to "take them into your heart". Delvin further elaborated, stating:

You might not have the long hair that I do or the language that I do, but innately you know how to tread the water of culture and how to build relations between Pearson and the Elder. There is an Element of spirit, the gap in-between the processes, where the Elders understand you and you understand them and they are comfortable with you.

Barrett (2012) described openness to other cultures as an aspect of the attitude that anyone with intercultural competence had to have in order to be effective. He elaborated, enumerating the core value of attitude as "willingness to learn about other cultures; openness to people from other cultures; willingness to suspend judgement; willingness to tolerate ambiguity; and valuing cultural diversity" (p. 4). What Barret described is reflexivity. Michie (2014) described

willingness or openness to other cultures as a trait that individuals acquire through positive cultural experiences that encourages them to move between cultures and to learn about the other culture. Szasz (2001) described the trait of openness to other cultures as “receptiveness to the ways and words of others” (p. 296).

Another aspect of the culture broker described in our conversation and that is particularly unique from the literature on culture broker, concerns the role and the significance of protocol. Delvin believes that engaging with Elders and Knowledge Keepers is akin to Ceremony. For Ceremony to occur, the presence of tobacco is vital (Ermine, 2000; Fiddler, 2014; Kovach, 2009, Makosis, 2008; Wilson, 2009). While Delvin explained that the dialogue is not a true Ceremony in the sense that a Sweat Lodge or a Pipe ceremony might be, it does have elements that render it ceremony-like. It is no coincidence that Wilson (2009) considers research as Ceremony since elements of Indigenous research contains the very elements of prayer, tobacco offerings, reflection, intuition, and trust (Fiddler, 2014; Kovach, 2009, Makosis, 2008; Wilson, 2009).

In a similar way, dialogue during the PSSC contained prayer, knowledge involved tobacco offerings, song, and teachings. Elders imparted to us knowledge derived from their relationships with the Land and with Creator. Culture brokers in the PSSC, whether they knew it or not, played a role as “pseudo-oskâpêwisak”, in the sense that they acted as Elders’ helpers might do, clarifying answers, ensuring the comfort of the Elders, and creating conditions in which relationships and trust could be established. The notion of trust established through the giving of tobacco is clearly outlined in Indigenous scholarship (Battiste, 2002; Cajete, 2000; Ermine, 2007; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008), but the connection between tobacco, trust and the culture broker has yet to be established. As a collective understanding of the importance of

protocols and the offering of tobacco grows, more people will grasp its importance in cultural brokerage with Indigenous peoples in Saskatchewan.

While Delvin does suggest that the *oskâpêwis* would make fine culture brokers because of their standing within the Community, their relationships to Elders, their understanding of protocol, and ways of knowing, he suggested that a culture broker does not necessarily need to be an *oskâpêwis*. In fact, in our conversation, it also becomes clear that one does not have to necessarily belong to the First Nation to be in the role of culture broker. For Delvin, what matters most was one's sincerity towards the people for whom, they acted as culture broker. This is evident in his statement, "If someone with the intention to get help through building relationships and through trust, knows the protocols and understands how to approach Elders or Knowledge Keepers with tobacco in hand and then that individual can be a broker, Indigenous or not". Delvin's views here contrast with the work of Wyatt (1998, 1999) and Satterfield et al. (2002) whose work in second language acquisition and health care with Alaskan Indigenous peoples, respectively, suggest that the effective culture brokers must be members of the Indigenous community and be conversant in the language. Although Delvin suggested that people who understand, accept, and take the protocols to heart, regardless of their culture, may act as a broker, he noted several times throughout our interview that some knowledge of language is helpful in order to understand the underlying meaning in the process of Indigenous pedagogy. Willingness to learn another language, demonstrates one's willingness to learn, and to build relationships with the community.

Finally, when I connect Delvin's notion of culture broker to the last question in our conversation regarding the ways that school divisions, universities and teacher-training programs could identify pre-service teachers who would make outstanding culture brokers, especially

teachers who would make great culture brokers for Indigenous students, I conclude that there is no easy way. The way to identify good culture brokers is as difficult as asking an Elder how they identify an *oskâpêwis*. Delvin's description of cultural buy-in and the examples he gives me about cultural buy-in suggests that this trait is not easily discoverable through a university course or workshop or professional development. Rather he suggests that pre-service teachers or any teacher for that matter, must have opportunities through mentorship and exposure to culture to grow in understanding about Indigenous culture and issues. These opportunities, such as culture camps and mentorship with Elders, would also afford leaders a chance to look for traits such as sincerity, openness to culture and buy-in. Mentorship also means that this growth and nurturing takes time. Thus, the best that school divisions and teaching programs could do is offer opportunities for mentorship and ample chances for exposure to a wide variety of cultural opportunities.

A Reflective Commentary on my Conversation with Elder Mary Lee

From my conversation with Elder Mary, a distinctly Nehiyaw picture of the culture broker emerged since her entire life-experience is rooted from that cultural context. Mary Lee described herself in her youth a woman-in learning and later as an Elder and culture broker. From early childhood on, Mary grew up as a young woman-in-learning. She was taught Nehiyaw ways of knowing, spirituality, and protocol through her mother, through relationships with Elders in her community, and through observation. She developed an aptitude in both Nehiyaw and English languages. She explained, "I was raised in the two worlds consistently. We spoke English but we only spoke Cree to my mother because that is the only language she knew". Because of her cultural background as well as her background as a teacher in schools, through her understanding and her experience as a Cree speaker walking in two worlds, her insights

helped me draw parallels between the role of the *oskâpêwisak* or the woman-in learning to the role of the culture broker.

From our discussions, I noted the parallel qualities that both roles shared: humility, respect, humour, empathy, compassion, understanding, openness, honesty, and willingness to share knowledge. For me, however, it was the significant distinctions that I noted between a conventional culture broker and *Oskâpêwis* that became the focus for this reflective commentary. These distinctions, namely; (1) a deep knowledge of language, culture, and protocol (2) connections to the communities; and (3) a profoundly different understanding of time are qualities that I come to believe that many non-Aboriginal people must recognize in order to become successful culture brokers in their intercultural interactions with Aboriginal people.

Mary began our conversation by defining a notion of culture broker as she understood it. For her, the immediate parallel for the culture broker in *Nehiyaw* society is the *oskâpêwis*. Mary stated, “Culture broker for me is like *oskâpêwis* sharing and introducing the knowledge that is shared to him by the Knowledge Keepers. He is a broker. Only men can be *oskâpêwis* [but] women helpers are called women-in-learning”. From the earliest remembered history of the *Nehiyaw* to present time, Mary suggested, both men and women helpers, called *oskâpêwisak* and women-in-learning respectively, play the role of intermediary between the Elder and the community but since first contact with European colonists that role has developed a more intercultural aspect as *Nehiyaw* culture is in contact with many different cultures. The many qualities and dispositions of the *oskâpêwisak* and the women-in-learning enable them to create conditions of dialogue and cooperation. These skills and aptitudes consist of their ability for

diplomacy, knowledge of the language and protocols, and their relationships with the Community.

In my discussion with Mary, I noted that the two considerable differences between outsiders, working at cultural brokerage, and *oskâpêwisak* who have lived their entire life within the cultures of their communities are intertwined. One difference is a depth of understanding of culture and protocol that an outsider could not easily achieve, and the second involves a sense of kinship, common cultural practices, language, and relationship that creates automatic bonds between people of the same culture. A culture broker, who is also *oskâpêwis* and a member of the Community, has a profound lived-experience of culture, proficiency of language, and a greater understanding of protocol, which may help the *oskâpêwis* gain greater access to ways of knowing restricted to outsiders. Thus, *oskâpêwis* as culture brokers may have greater success at establishing intercultural dialogue than an outsider as culture broker because of these skills and knowledge.

In Mary's interview I see these intertwining ideas manifested. I will use myself as an example. In the context of the PSSC meetings, there were instances in which I undertook the role of *oskâpêwis*. Being that I am not Nehiyaw, but have been taught aspects of their cultural ways, Mary Lee suggested that I was fairly effective as an *oskâpêwis* as culture broker. She commented:

[During the Pearson meetings], for example, you were the *oskâpêwis*. You did it according to the way it should be done. You gave us tobacco. You started every meeting with a smudge, a prayer and the drum was used to echo that honesty and that peacefulness. Because it was done in that way, it worked.

But as our conversation continued, Mary also remarked that:

some [culture brokers] are more powerful [because they] know their culture and their protocols, everything. They're not guessing if they're doing it right. [Someone like Delvin would be an excellent culture broker because] he knows his language, teachings and protocols.

Protocols establish a relationship between the giver and the Elder. They frame the relationship and dialogue around an ethic of respect and honesty. How much the Elder is able to share depends on the context, the willingness, and the readiness of the recipient to learn. Mary remarked that in many of our meetings, many Elders felt pressured to share but that she did not feel that Elders shared more than they needed to. In this instance, the *oskâpêwis* as culture broker would have more readily understood this tension and may have redirected the conversation or even halted the line of questioning that was causing the Elders to feel they had to share more than they could. Language, culture and understanding of protocols, subtleties of body language, and kinship to Elders distinguish the Elder's helper from the conventional culture broker.

Elders' helpers who are called on to become culture brokers and who are raised in Aboriginal cultures would understand many of these subtleties. They learn the protocols through their mentorship with Elders, through direct instruction or indirectly, through modeling. Perhaps, more importantly, Elders' helpers learn about the appropriate frame of mind and spirit, in which the offering is made.

Elder Mary Lee's most memorable story to illustrate the state of mind and spirit involved an Elder, who taught her the lesson of time and patience. In that tale, she came impatiently to ask an Elder a question. Even though she had brought him tobacco, he made her wait for days for an answer. Mary Lee recounted,

Years ago, I remember visiting an Elder and taking my cloth and tobacco. I had maybe only an hour or an hour and half that I could spend with him. I should have known better because I was raised different. I went from Saskatoon and drove for two and a half hours to the visit these Elders. I walked in and didn't even sit down. I stood up. I gave my cloth, and my offering. That protocol was ok but they never said a thing to me. Finally, I figured I would sit down for a while. I sat down. The Elder was sitting on the ground, he and his wife. Quite a while after, he spoke. He said, "Grandchild, I accept your tobacco and your offering, but I'm not a machine that you can turn on and I can start talking. No. The question you came for, come back in four days, then I'll answer you". What I came for, I didn't get but what I got was a very powerful teaching.

Mary's story suggests to me that Elders know when one is ready to receive a teaching. They know what state of mind and spirit one must have to be able to hear. I gleaned from Mary's teaching that tobacco offerings are not a formality; they are crucial to establish the right conditions for dialogue, for help, or for ceremony. These conditions consist (1) establishing a relationship with people of the community, (2) offering tobacco to Elders, providing for their immediate needs such remuneration for transportation and accommodations, and (3) most significantly, having the right attitude.

Mary's story segues into a discussion of the third distinction that separates the conventional culture broker and one who is rooted in Indigenous culture. This significance is an appreciation for ways cultural constructs such as time affects approaches to dialogue. In Aboriginal cultures, it was etiquette and protocol to provide Elders with ample time to speak, for everyone to voice their opinion, and to reach consensus. Authors such as Aikenhead and Michell (2011); Janca and Bullen (2003) suggest that Indigenous peoples do not think of time in the same

ways that Europeans or North Americans do. Many Aboriginal cultures view time as cyclical and non-linear (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011), or in metaphysical terms such as dream-time (Janca & Bullen, 2003). Janca and Bullen (2003) expressed that among Australian Aboriginal people, ‘it is not important when things happen, it is important that they happen’ (p. 40). This expression describes a real disconnect between Indigenous and Western beliefs and expectations about time. Janca and Bullen (2003) described that disconnect as “an uneasy truce between the pull of uniquely Indigenous social and cultural obligations and priorities that, for an Aboriginal person, exist outside of conventional time and the realities of daily living in a world ruled by the clock” (p. 40). Mary Lee described that disconnect this way:

In our culture, everyone has their say. But that’s not how the meetings are held now.

People have important things to say. They [the Elders] are put up there at the front to speak but there isn’t much time. I noticed that change. I don’t know why that is. Whether people are panicking for time but it shouldn’t be that way.... That’s when the *oskâpêwis* or the broker, a good broker, can step in and to hold the people back if they interrupt to allow Elders the time they need to speak. Years ago, growing up, we had to sit still. We had to listen and we couldn’t interrupt. That was to give the Elder time to think and to talk. That was so important.

The implication for culture brokerage is that there must be a greater sensitivity to various cultural understanding and expectation of time. These expectations affect how each cultural group approaches a shared task or dialogue. Without a deeper sense, understanding, and sensitivity to these expectations, the result is tension, disconnect, poor exchange of information or even conflict.

In the context of the PSSC, beliefs about time affected our collaboration. There was the need to balance time for discussion and reflection with deadlines. Elders' needed more time to reflect, to discuss their ideas with other Elders, and to translate their teachings into concepts that authors and Pearson personnel could understand. This was not merely translating language but ideas from one culture to another. In some cases, Mary suggested that Elders became culture brokers for each other, translating these ideas back and forth between their respective cultural groups in the attempt to discover cultural parallels between distinct Aboriginal groups.

Mary Lee did not explicitly state she or the Elders felt rushed during the meetings, but there were times during the Elder gatherings, where some Elders spoke more quickly and briefly on topics that I expected would take longer. When I think back to our initial meeting with all the Elders at the Bessborough, I know that many of my colleagues, members of the Pearson staff, and leaders expressed anxiety about how much time it took for preliminary introductions, protocol, prayer, and Elders to speak. For some non-Aboriginal participants of the PSSC, the time taken which was nearly two-thirds of the day for introductions and relationship building, was nearly too much.

A culture broker's task was to temper those expectations. To temper those expectations, means that one would have to impress upon the PSSC team that the task of text-book development could not begin until relationships had been formed, nor was it more important than the development of relationships or the observance of protocol. Towards, the end of the project, that understanding eventually came as relationships had evolved and developed. Similarly, the Elders realised the impact of these time constraints and the ensuing costs, and thus, they worked with the PSSC to meet these deadlines.

Mary's teachings have several implications for culture brokers. First, there must be a recognition that cultural brokerage with Aboriginal people requires a necessary deepening understanding of culture, particularly of protocol. There must be a shift in attitude away from a belief in tobacco offerings as formality to an understanding and appreciation that protocols create conditions of dialogue, respect, and relationship. Second, there has to be a shift in mindset too, where culture brokers understand that the help or knowledge they receive from Elders is measured by their readiness and the context. Third, where possible it is helpful to develop a rudimentary knowledge of language. Many Aboriginal languages are so nuanced and complex that I recognized that most non-Indigenous speakers would have great difficulty. However, learning a basic lexicon demonstrates openness on the part of the culture broker to learn. A final implication for culture brokerage involves an expanding cultural awareness about the ways Aboriginal conceive reality, constructs such as time. An understanding of these conceptions allows culture brokers to negotiate approaches to dialogue and to conflict to ensure that cultural conceptions are respected. An understanding of these three distinctions, and having the capacity to develop them, will enable non-Aboriginal culture brokers to better work in intercultural contexts.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussions and Conclusions

This exploration on the role, traits, nature, and disposition of the culture broker has highlighted for me that a fuller understanding of this area of research is needed, especially when it concerns working and collaborating with Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan. At the outset of this study, a body of Western research on the subject existed but there was little investigation on the ways that cultural brokerage impacted Aboriginal people in a Saskatchewan context. My closest experience of bridging cultures was a project aimed at infusing Aboriginal ways of knowing and science together to produce a resource destined for all schools in Saskatchewan. The project had a very strong cultural component; its success would rely on the willingness of people to share knowledge of their culture with each other. This was the setting where I could better understand the work of bridging cultures.

Originally I did not have a word for this kind of cultural work but I settled on the notion of cultural brokerage. This study examined the work of culture brokers and the effects of cultural brokerage on the experiences of people involved in a local resource development project, the Pearson Saskatchewan Science Collaboration (PSSC). Two Aboriginal and two non-Aboriginal participants were queried for their views on the role, the nature, the traits of culture brokers involved in the PSSC.

Many of the responses from the participants in this study affirmed ideas that are already described in the literature. For instance, participants agreed that the role of culture is highly context dependent (Michie, 2014; Szasz, 2001) is significant to advance dialogue, and is necessary to promote understanding among disparate cultures. Traits of the culture broker included characteristics such as an attitude of openness to other culture (Aikenhead, 1997, 2001,

2002; Aikenhead & Huntley, 1999; Michie, 2014; Szasz, 2001), empathy (Satterfield et al., 2002), and curiosity (Barrett, 2008). Motivations for cultural brokerage comprised the desire to affect social change, to create understanding, and to achieve a desired outcome (Szasz, 2001). The participants identified two conditions, safety and respect, that were needed to create a place authentic of dialogue (Ermine, 2007). Beyond these findings, which are found in other research on culture broker, this study yielded several new insights.

One contribution of this work was to provide a better understanding of a local Aboriginal perspective on the role and the importance of the culture broker in cross-cultural exchange. They elucidate how the cultural roles of the *oskâpêwis*, Elder's helper, and cultural protocols become the vital starting point to appreciate an Aboriginal view of ethical cultural brokerage (Ermine, 2007; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). As a result of a deepening appreciation of Aboriginal protocols, conversely, there is a simultaneous sensitization to the ways that unspoken and unchallenged Western protocols have had on dialogue with Aboriginal communities and to the hidden, assumed protocols to which we expect other cultures to conform. This is consistent with Ermine's (2007) view that colonialism and prejudice must be challenged in order to reach a place where parties meet on equal footing. Those unspoken Western protocols pervade contexts where the most vulnerable students, school children, are in classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Williams, 2011; Slorózano & Yosso, 2002; Tupper, 2011) and must be rooted out.

Since the work of the culture broker is highly circumstantial and contextual, it seemed hardly right that the local circumstances, perspectives and contexts of the Indigenous perspectives were diminished or absent from the conversation. As I read the work of various authors even those who were allies of Indigenous people, I noted that their work described the notion of culture broker from a Western perspective. Admittedly, my description of culture

broker is as much rooted in a Western perspective because I was raised and educated in rural Saskatchewan; however, I wanted to include Mary's and Delvin's voices and to let them speak to directly to the reader in this work. This is why I presented their words as a condensed transcript. I took out my comments and my questions, and together, Mary, Delvin and I decided to make their transcripts available for the audience to read and to learn as teachings.

Delvin and Mary's teachings revealed many qualities that are recognized by many Aboriginal people as significant in a culture broker. This understanding derives from a lifetime experience with ceremony living in connection with Mother Earth. For Mary and Delvin, the nearest concept of culture broker is the Elder's helper, the *oskâpêwis*. Hence, the qualities of the *oskâpêwis* shape how they have interpreted the notion of culture broker in this study. Delvin, as an *oskâpêwis* and Knowledge Keeper, explained that it is his obligation to learn as much as he could about *Nehiyaw* ceremonies and protocols by working with older, learned mentors, his Elders. Mary told stories about her tutelage as a "woman-in-learning", or a Woman Elder's helper. Moreover, from our discussions, I inferred that not all *oskâpêwis* might make suitable culture brokers and that not all *oskâpêwis* may choose to become culture brokers. However, culture brokers who are *oskâpêwisak* have the advantage as they have ties to the community and have credibility within it. Moreover, their extensive lived knowledge, especially around protocols, makes it far easier for them to access help from Elders and to create conditions suitable for dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal parties.

Mary and Delvin went on to explain how their knowledge came from years of mentorship. Both participants indicated that although, knowledge of culture, language and protocol are vital to the work of culture brokers who work with Aboriginal people, they do not expect that all culture brokers, especially non-*Nehiyaw* people, will learn the language or aspects

of the culture to the same degree as members of the community. This fact does not completely diminish the effectiveness of non-*Nehiyaw* culture brokers however but they both emphasized that culture brokers had to know, at least, some aspects of Aboriginal cultures with whom they worked. Some aspects of culture may include a rudimentary knowledge of language, a knowledge of protocols, an experience of ceremony, song, or prayer. However, Mary and Delvin concluded that a culture broker's sincerity and openness to learn from and to work with the Community are critical. That openness to culture extends to the culture broker's willingness to work within the norms and the local protocols of the Community.

Among all Aboriginal peoples, protocols are ways of being and relating to each other that is upheld by values of reciprocity and respect. These protocols may describe how ceremonies, community gatherings, and relationships are conducted (Ermine et al., 2005). The particular protocols, that surfaced in my conversations with Mary and Delvin, which affects intercultural dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, included the offering of tobacco and the provision for Elders. The act of the offering tobacco creates a sacred bond between the giver and the recipient (Ermine et al., 2005; Ermine, 2007). By offering tobacco, the giver makes a request for help, for healing, for knowledge, or for teachings (Linklater, 2010). The receiver, on the other hand, by accepting the tobacco, agrees to help and to speak the truth.

In many Aboriginal cultures, where the act of reciprocity and generosity meant survival, protocols acknowledge the contributions of the Elders, and the community in turn, provides for their Elders with food, shelter, and other necessities. Although tobacco is the only necessary element to establish that relationship with Elders, it is really important for non-*Nehiyaw* people to appreciate that Elders are appropriately compensated for their time, their expertise, their advice, their knowledge, and their experience.

Effective culture brokers, aware of the need to provide for Elders, understand that Elders need funds for transportation, accommodations, meals and other needs. Dean Elliott's story, recalling an early incident where Elder's honoraria cheques had not arrived on time and risked scuttling the PSSC at the initial meeting, confronted many suppositions that the planning committee of the PSSC had. They assumed that Elders had the means to come to the meeting, could easily access accommodations, and had enough disposable income that they did not rely on the honoraria to provide them with immediate funds. Dean explained, "[Pearson] didn't have money for the Elders at that first meeting at the Bessborough; some Elders didn't have money to go home. Not understanding clearly enough, on our part, what it means to look after the Elders". Dean's example connected the obvious role of culture broker's, bridging understanding to the more important but less obvious goal of caring for the people of that culture. His example highlights how aspects of life, that are accepted as normative in Eurocentric cultures, create barriers for people from other cultures.

In my conversation with Glen Aikenhead, he noted that in the context of the PSSC although our meetings began with a smudge, prayer and song, there were other Western protocols and limits to which the Aboriginal participants were expected to adhere: agendas, time limits, indoor spaces, four walls, and written feed-back among many others. Many of these protocols were unseen and often hidden. In order to understand to really appreciate the effect that these protocols have on Indigenous people, one had to have experienced being marginalized (Cobern & Aikenhead, 1998; Costa, 1995; Jegede & Aikenhead, 1999; Needham & Cottrell, 2008; Michie, 2014). Unspoken Western protocols, described by Tupper (2012), Ladson-Billings, (1998) and others, are known if one has the ability to be reflexive. Reflexivity is the ability to understand and challenge hidden suppositions with respect to race, class, gender, and

culture (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2011). Cunliffe and June (2005) describe reflexivity “as a dialogue with self about our fundamental assumptions, values, and ways of interacting. In this dialogue, we question our core beliefs and our understanding of particular events” (p. 229). A culture broker had to have the ability to be reflexive. Furthermore, Glen suggested that effective culture brokers would have the capacity for “two-eyed seeing”, the ability to appreciate and to fully acknowledge the entirety of another culture even though aspects of that culture may conflict or differ with one’s own (Hatcher et al., 2009).

Mary, Delvin, Dean and Glen’s contributions led me to realize that the culture broker’s two most important roles may be (1) to help other people engage in two-eye seeing whereby the culture broker promotes a kind of self-reflection in other people at a “meta-level”; and (2) through inspiring self-introspection and awareness, to be able to move engagement from dialogue to further action.

Therefore, these findings highlight the importance for opportunities for introspection. To acquire the ability for self-reflection, to be able to suspend inherent cultural biases, and to be able to “two-eyed see” are skills that will require a lifetime to develop. To raise awareness of hidden assumptions, and to help others develop those abilities, requires more than a single event. It may require more than sporadic and episodic exposure. It might require a sustained cultural immersion but the participants of this study, unanimously agree that a good first step is to provide as many cultural opportunities to develop an understanding of Aboriginal cultures. These opportunities would provide pre-service teachers, leaders, and current teachers with the opportunities to learn more about the Aboriginal cultures and would provide knowledge, cultural experiences, and skills to become potential culture brokers.

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APPENDIX A

- (1) One possible understanding of the term “culture broker” is: an individual, who is grounded in a particular culture, and can help other people from another culture make a crossing from their respective culture into the culture of the culture broker. How do you describe, or understand the notion of culture broker?
- (2) During the Pearson Saskatchewan Science Collaboration did you consider yourself a culture broker? If so, in what way did you consider yourself a culture broker in that context? If not, then could you identify which people undertook the role of cultural broker during the Pearson Saskatchewan Science Collaboration?
- (3) What are qualities that made these individuals good culture brokers?
- (4) How did these individuals as culture brokers promote positive and ethical intercultural dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people during the PSSC?
- (5) What dispositions, orientations, callings, and motivations do these individuals have that compel them to become culture brokers?
- (6) Describe some constraints or barriers encountered that prevented cultural brokerage from happening during the PSSC.
- (7) How did involvement in the PSSC process lead to greater cross-cultural openness for yourself or for others?
- (8) What contributions did culture brokers make to content of the textbooks? to our dialogues?
- (9) How does traditional protocol change the nature of cultural brokerage when it comes to dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people? Do you see a place for the *oskâpêwisak* as culture broker in these instances?

- (10) How might universities and school divisions train or identify pre-service teachers who have the qualities necessary to be good culture brokers for all students but in particular, Aboriginal students?

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INVITATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

RESEARCHERS: Ted View (Master's candidate), Jeff Baker (co-supervisor/principal investigator), and Dr. Michael Cottrell (co-supervisor/ principal investigator).

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July, 2015.

Dear Participant:

My name is Ted View. As a Master's student enrolled in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan, I am conducting research for my thesis. My study is called *Mîyo Pikiskwatitowin* (*Nehiyaw* for speaking to each other in a good way). I will be exploring the role of the culture broker in intercultural dialogue between First Nations and non-First Nations in the context of the Pearson Saskatchewan Science Collaboration (PSCC) of which you were a part.

I will be conducting visits to gather knowledge and to collect data for my study between August and October, 2015. In this study, I invite you to share your experiences and understanding of the role of culture broker. Generally speaking, a culture broker is an individual who is grounded in a specific culture, but who can help other people from other cultures to (1) learn about their

culture, (2) create an environment where people of different cultures can meet and share ideas, or (3) to facilitate dialogue with people from different cultures.

During the course of the PSSC several years ago, I realized how the project may not have been as successful without the involvement of many people who helped many of the writers, researchers, ministry, and Pearson personnel make a cultural crossing from their own worldview and culture into the culture of Aboriginal people. These culture brokers may not have thought of themselves as culture brokers or intermediaries, although they did play a crucial role by bridging understanding and openness for people of different backgrounds to dialogue respectfully.

I am interested to find out what characteristics, dispositions, motivations, and attitudes that these culture brokers have in order for them to do this work. The results from this study will help inform how we better understand the role, characteristics, motivations, and dispositions of these individual. I hope that with the help of Aboriginal partners, academic institutions, such as school divisions and the university, that a program can be created to identify, nurture and foster these traits in pre-service teachers, tenured teachers, and school based leaders. Of course, I would invite your counsel in others ways that I am able to give back and make a contribution to the community.

I want to be respectful of your schedules and I would be very grateful if you could provide some time for visit, in which we would have a conversation about the topic of culture broker. We will choose a time, location, and date that best suits you. The conversation will consist of an hour, and we have the option of scheduling additional interviews if we feel it is necessary.

You have the right to choose to remain anonymous in the study. However, I also realize that as part of the cultural ethic, Elders and Knowledge Keepers may wish to provide their names and backgrounds to fully ground the knowledge, and to provide a context to their share in their own experiences and cultural teachings. I respectfully acknowledge this ethic, and will include a short biography, your name, and any context should you choose.

Moreover, I will adhere to cultural protocols for this study. Tobacco and cloth will be offered to the candidates, prior to gathering knowledge. Cultural advisors will also be consulted during each aspect of the study from the initial stages of research preparation, to the writing, and finally to the last stage of the process, giving back to the community.

The conversation will be recorded in order to ensure accuracy. Once our conversation has been transcribed, you have the opportunity to review the transcript in order to change, to add, or to delete anything in the transcript. The knowledge that I gather from these conversations will be presented in a condensed form. At this stage, you will have a chance to review, to add, or to delete any part of the condensed conversation that you deem appropriate. The transcripts and the condensed conversation will be used to create a reflective commentary, which is a form of reflection on what I learned from our time together. This reflection will include the results that I gather from our conversation. Once the reflective commentary is drafted, I will ask to visit with you again to review it with you to ensure that I have correctly represented your views, opinions, and ideas.

The questions that I will ask during our conversation are provided along with this letter for your perusal. If you consent to participate in this study, please read through and sign the consent form provided for you. Please note that in signing the consent form, you are not bound to participate if you change your mind and you may withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussions or consequences.

If you have any further questions, or need more information please contact me by e-mail or by phone. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ted View, Master's student

APPENDIX C

Consent Form

You are invited to participate in the research study entitled, MÎYO PÎKISKWATITOWIN (SPEAKING TO EACH OTHER IN A GOOD WAY): THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURE BROKERS IN INTERCULTURAL COLLABORATION WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Please read this and consider this form carefully. Please contact me if have any questions regarding this form.

RESEARCHERS: Ted View (Master's candidate), Jeff Baker (co-supervisor/principal investigator), and Dr. Michael Cottrell (co-supervisor/ principal investigator).

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Purpose and Procedure:

You will be asked to describe your understanding of the role, traits, characteristics, dispositions, and motivations of the culture broker in intercultural dialogue between First Nations and non-First Nations in the context of the Pearson Saskatchewan Science Collaboration.

The goal is to determine what are the qualities, characteristics, dispositions, and motivations of the culture broker. In addition, I would like to find out what role the culture broker played in the dialogue that came out of the Pearson Saskatchewan Science collaborations. The knowledge gathered from this research will help inform ways that academic institutions, such as schools and universities, identify and nurture pre-service, tenured teachers, and school-based leaders who may have the traits of culture brokers. The aim of these programs is to foster and nurture these traits so that we can help teachers to evolve in culturally responsive teaching, and to decolonize education.

You will be asked to participate in a conversation that will last approximately an hour between in October-November, 2015. The location and time will be chosen at your convenience. Our conversations will be audiotaped and transcribed. You may request to have the recorder turn off at any point during the conversation. For Aboriginal Elders and Knowledge Keepers, I will adhere to cultural protocols and offer tobacco and cloth.

After our session, and prior to making meaning (data analysis), you will be given the opportunity to review the transcript of our conversation. You are given the opportunity to add, alter, or delete information from the transcript as you deem appropriate. The information from the transcript will then be made into condensed narratives. At this point, you will again have the chance to add, change, or delete information as you deem appropriate. Based on information from the transcript and condensed narratives, I will reflect on what I have learned from our conversations and I will present my thoughts as a reflective commentary.

The findings of this study are needed for the completion of my Master's thesis, a requirement of my degree. In addition, any information that I gather may be used for other research, conference papers and journal articles.

Potential Benefits: I cannot guarantee that participants will gain personal benefit; however there are benefits of this study for other people. First, one potential benefit includes a written record of the Pearson Saskatchewan Science Collaboration (PSSC). This may serve as an example of positive intercultural dialogue. Another potential benefit is that the wisdom and knowledge of Elders and Knowledge keepers involved in PSSC may be used to advance the learning of other scholars or students in the areas of cultural brokerage, research with Indigenous people, or intercultural dialogue. In addition, any information from this research will be used to identify, and to develop programs that would nurture these qualities in other culture brokers. The aim of these programs would be to decolonize education. A last potential benefit is that I am able to give back to the Aboriginal community. As a part of my research journey in Indigenous research methodology, my cultural advisors and I will determine ways that I will give back to the community through this research.

Potential Risk: In this study, the risks to you are minimal. You will not be asked to describe or to speak about personal experiences that are uncomfortable. There are no negative consequences or penalty should you choose not to answer a question. No comments that you make will be used inappropriately. The use of your words and ideas will only be done after you have a chance to review the transcripts, condensed narratives, and reflective commentaries. At any of these junctures, you have the right to change, delete, or add to any of the information as you deem

appropriate. Lastly, I cannot guarantee that other people, who read my work, may use any findings appropriately. In order to ensure that does not happen, I will work diligently with Aboriginal participants, and the study's cultural advisors to ensure any research findings will be amenable to all parties involved.

Acknowledgement of cultural protocols: I acknowledge the significance of cultural protocols. As a result, I will offer tobacco and cloth to the Aboriginal participants in this study. I acknowledge the cultural ethic by which Aboriginal people, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers wish to be named and to have their backgrounds included in this research in order to fully ground their knowledge, experiences and cultural teachings. I respectfully acknowledge this ethic, and will include a short biography, name, cultural affiliation, cultural context, and any other information that Aboriginal participants wish to include.

I will collaborate with Aboriginal cultural advisors through this project from the initial phases of this study, research preparation, the gathering of knowledge (collecting data), making meaning (data analysis and presenting findings), and finally giving back to the community. Cultural advisors will have a say in the way that I am able to give back to the community through my research.

Confidentiality: You may choose to remain confidential in this study. In order to protect your confidentiality, we will use letters to denote participants. For example, a participant who wishes to remain confidential will be identified as Participant A. I will keep no record of your name and identifying information in my notes or in any recording.

There are limits to confidentiality:

- Limits due to the nature of the group activities. (eg. such as focus groups)
- Limits due to context: individual participants could be identified because their relationship to the researcher.
- Limits due to selection: procedures for recruitment or selecting participants may compromise the confidentiality of the participants (eg. Participants are referred by a person outside the research team)

Right to Withdraw: You have the right to withdraw as your participation is completely voluntary. Moreover, you have the right to answer only the questions you are comfortable answering. Any information that you share with me will be kept in strict confidence and will only be discussed with the research team if there is a need. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any point without negative consequences or penalties.

You may withdraw at any time without any penalty or repercussions up until the thesis is submitted to College of Graduate Studies and Research.

The narrative inquiry will be recorded. You may request that the recorder be turned off at any time.

Questions: If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me any point

This research project has sought ethics approval from the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant you may contact the Research Ethics Office at:

ethics.office@usask.ca

phone: (306) 966-2975.

Out of town participants may call toll free 1(866) 966-2975.

Follow-Up and Debriefing: I will provide a brief written summary of the findings to all participants who wish it. An electronic copy of the final research project will be available to you.

Consent to Participate:

I have read and I understand the description of the study provided above. I have been given ample opportunity to ask questions and to receive answers to my questions. I consent to participate in this research project with the understanding that I have the right to withdraw my consent at any time during this research. A copy of this Consent Form has been provided to me for my records.

I grant permission to have my name and biography used: Yes____ No____

Name of Participant

Date

Signature of Participant

Signature of Researcher

APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIPT RELEASE FORM

Title:

MÎYO PÎKISKWATITOWIN (SPEAKING TO EACH OTHER IN A GOOD WAY):
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURE BROKERS IN INTERCULTURAL COLLABORATION
WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

I, _____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with Ted View. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Ted View to be used in the manner described in the Consent Form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant Signature of researcher

APPENDIX E

Culture brokers in context of Pearson Saskatchewan Science meetings

This is a condensed transcript of my interview with Elder Mary Lee at my home in Saskatoon Oct 28th, 2015. The transcript is complete but sections of this transcript that address similar content or issues have been synthesized to make the transcript more coherent. I removed all the questions and all of my comments in this conversation to allow the script to flow.

Background

Elder Mary Lee is a Nehiyaw Elder from Pelican Lake and Chitek Lake, and now resides in Martensville. Mary is an educator with over 30 years of experience. Mary is a mother, grandmother and great grandmother to a very large family. Raised by her mother as a woman-in-learning, Mary speaks her Nehiyaw language fluently and is immersed in the ways of her people. Today, Mary works as an Elder Counsellor for Oskayak high school. Mary Lee was one of the attending Elders, who were involved with the Pearson Saskatchewan Science Collaboration from its beginning to its conclusion.

Our conversation

Following protocols, I gave Mary tobacco for this particular interview. We began with a prayer and a smudge.

Mary's prayer

We do a smudge today and I ask for blessing for what we are about to do. I do it for the sake of our people, our young people and our young people in the future. I do it for the sake of all young people who will be in need of knowledge, this knowledge that we're passing on and sharing. Hai hai.

Mary's teachings on the culture broker

Culture broker for me is like oskâpêwis sharing and introducing the knowledge that is shared to him by the Knowledge Keepers. He is a broker. Only men can be oskâpêwis. Women helpers are called women-in-learning. We do that. I did that. I learned from the women Elders and I was able to share and pass on to this day, the knowledge that was shared with me.

[During the Pearson meetings], I [participated] as an Elder but I also, I think, I did the other role, culture broker role, because I passed on information that they used. I think that is what made us all culture brokers because we shared our knowledge. I think most of us [knowledge Keepers and Elders] also undertook that role because we shared our knowledge to the best of our ability with the Pearson authors. We could only say or share what we learned and what we understood. I understood that we were all culture brokers but the men were [able to act in the role of] the oskâpêwisak although they were Elders. As for the women Elders, we also acted as women-in-learning, helpers, because you never stop learning. As long as you live, you learn.

Most of the [Elders and Knowledge Keepers] I worked with [during the development of the science projects] followed their protocols and their ways. They were humble. I think they tried to help Pearson understand that we are knowledgeable. A lot of our knowledge is unwritten as you well know. We don't write everything in detail about ceremonies. We call them teachings. They're like stories. They interconnect. Sometimes, we don't share those stories so they can be written. The Elders at these meetings were very careful about what they shared. I know because I was listening very carefully. They were careful not to go into depth too much about certain knowledge. They didn't do it because they had something to gain. They did it because it came from their heart. A lot of us did it, thinking about the future of our people, for our young people. Most of us went there whole-heartedly to make a difference.

Some of those Elders are gone now. There was Alma Kitwayhat, Simon Kitwayhat, Ken Goodwill, Velma Goodfeather, Peter Bishop, and there was another gentleman from Fort Qu'appelle, Isadore Pelletier. As we spoke and as they spoke for their respective tribes but still our cultures are very much alike when it comes to the old cultural teachings. Different language but similar teachings.

I think they realized that we were strong in our culture and our language and the way that we lived was ok. It was healthy, much healthier than how many of our people live today. We had an understanding that everything is interconnected. All things created are to be respected and honoured, whether four-legged or crawling or flying things, we [human beings] interconnect with everything.

I think the respect was there. It was all the people who were willing to work together because we have to work together to be successful. It was the willingness of the Elders to share, for me, that was a very big thing. We shared our knowledge and we took knowledge from one another to enhance our sharing. A lot of us had the language, the same language, and to share in that way was very powerful. No one was holding anything back. Actually, they were relaxed. There was laughter. That's what made it so good. Well, you saw the way the collaborated and talked. I think we helped one another as culture brokers. I know it helped me because as we spoke, our conversations reminded me of knowledge that I set aside and didn't use. As we spoke about different topics it came to light the ideas and knowledge that we were supposed to talk about and to share. There were some barriers when we use our language. Sometimes, we can't really cross-translate easily. There were Elders helping each other how to understand, how to take the content and translate. I think knowing about their culture, knowing their language, and basically can translate for themselves. This is what I used to do, interpret, for my mother. I could

translate her teachings. You had to know your own culture, your own teachings in order to do that.

The dialogue really helped because there was greater understanding. The culture and the teachings were in [the textbook]. [Afterward, when the books were published] the students talked to me about the textbook. They really appreciated to see their people in a science book. Our people are knowledgeable about science and nature but they were never asked. By sharing that knowledge, I feel good about it. Teachings and cultural knowledge were put in the textbook in a good way.

Approaching Elders and protocol

Sometimes people [Knowledge Keepers, Elders] feel obligated when they are given tobacco because when you are given tobacco you are expected to be completely honest. It's better not to [take tobacco] and talk about certain teachings that you're not supposed to share [even] when you are presented with tobacco or when smudging. The Elder also knows the protocols themselves. They will not tell you that you shouldn't ask that. They will simply not tell you. They know how much to speak. It's not that they don't know. It's that they know how much to share.

Some of [Elders and Knowledge Keepers] felt a little bit of pressure to share [during the Pearson meetings]. I was listening and none of them shared more than they should. Young people tend to share more than they are supposed because they have not been grounded in their teachings properly to not write and to not share the sacred teachings of ceremonies.

You'll never know because they won't tell you but if you sat one on one with an Elder and if this Elder thinks you have a right to learn, that you are capable of holding a sacred

teaching, he or she does, they will share with you. But they will tell you, “Now, I am sharing something with you just for you, not to be written and not for anyone else.”

I think that many of us grew up in a time where we didn’t have a right to share and I think, especially for me, I couldn’t talk about my mother’s culture. I went to a white farm community school. She was Aboriginal and she spoke Nehiyaw or Cree, you would call it. We were Cree but my other side of the family wasn’t. It was to accept and to be ashamed of who you are. It was hard when it came time for me to share my bit of knowledge.

At that time, I was working at the Native Survival School (Oskayak). It was 1980. At that time the Elders said that we must have feasts (ceremony) at our school and no one knew how. They were asking staff, “Who knows how to do a feast. Who can prepare a feast”? I didn’t volunteer right away. I would never put up my hand and say, “I can! I can!”. But they asked if I know how and I said yes, I know how. I can work on that. I can prepare a feast and I can teach the women to help me but we also need Oskâpêwisak. The school community didn’t know how to get Elders but I told them I could get Elders but we really needed oskâpêwis to come and help the Elder with the feast and with the pipe ceremony. At that time, we weren’t allowed to do pipe ceremony at the school but we did. Fortunately, I knew an Elder who could perform a pipe ceremony. The Elder would always carry his pipe when he came to meetings. I used to get him to come to quietly do a ceremony for us. That was the first time I felt good [about my culture]. It was safe to talk about who I really was and what about my culture and my people.

The importance of protocol

Protocol is very necessary. It does not take money. The old people [Elders] always said that tobacco must be first. Smudge and prayer must be included, always.

I remember years ago, Elders came to Saskatoon from Little Pine and Thunderchild and to meet here, to talk about certain teachings and protocols, to share with others. This was there meeting place. It was in the late sixties. I remember that Simon Kitwayhat was an oskâpêwis then. He told me that he would come to meet with the Elders here and they shared knowledge. It's been done for a long time. Even us, in our communities, that's how we get the Elders to come out to help us. Blankets, honoraria, gifts, [and tea] these are ways of taking care of our Elders... it was what people needed to survive. In that time Elders travelled a long way.

I remember taking tea out to one of our Elders and an offering. He was so honoured because often the Elders didn't even have tea. I knew that because I grew up amongst them. Their needs were tea and sugar, which they treasured.

[During the Pearson meetings], for example, you were the oskâpêwis. You did it according to the way it should be done. You gave us tobacco. You started every meeting with a smudge, a prayer and the drum was used to echo that honesty and that peacefulness. Because it was done in that way, it worked. I know it worked because it affected a lot of people in a good way.

Remember how the Elders, during the Pearson meetings, were so appreciative when there was a snack or a tea or whatever...and a place to stay. That's important. They didn't have to look for a place to stay themselves. To have food. Breakfast, lunch and supper. That way, they had a way to get there. Some of them don't have a vehicle and sometimes they have to hire somebody but they'll go. They were so appreciative because that was a quality they appreciated. That was what they had done for their Elders.

The role of culture broker in the transmission of knowledge

All of my knowledge came from my mother and my grand-mother. All in the one language which was Cree. None of was given to me in English. Never written and never in book form. I've read books at the university level about our people and most of were written in the States and hardly any from Canada at that time. I had a solid foundation of learning from my mother and grandmother, which I couldn't get from a book. Then I started sharing the things that we had to do, cultural protocols, at work. The grandparents played a big role. So did uncles and aunties too. I learned a lot from my uncles and aunties who were very knowledgeable in the culture and the language. I was never taught anything in English, only Cree. That was what made it so powerful and pure.

I was already a translator. It was easy for me to teach because I understood the power of women. My mother was consistent and my kokum, and my aunties to instill those teachings in me, teachings about how powerful and sacred that women are. I had to speak English because the majority of our staff did not understand the language. The majority of them were not Aboriginal. I didn't find it a barrier to translate, myself, but it was ok.

If you have you're language [teachings and prayers] are more powerful but as you well know, many of our young people don't have their language. At least, [some of them] are learning. Their prayers, even though they may not be able to say in their language, as long as it comes from the heart, it has power. When you share from your heart it is so powerful whether you do it in your own language or another language. That's what the old people [Elders] told me. The Cree language is my first language and that's why I didn't have this problem. [I was able to translate English into Cree and vice versa] because I was also raised in the English language. I was raised in the two worlds consistently. We spoke English but we only spoke Cree to my mother because that is the only language she knew.

I think so because you understand the difficulty that the young people have in only understanding one language. You have to be able to translate as close and as pure as you can to the original teaching.

Some [culture brokers] are more powerful [because they] know their culture and their protocols, everything. They're not guessing if they're doing it right.

[Someone like Delvin would be an excellent culture broker because] he knows his language, teachings and protocols. If only we had ten of him which I wish! Even people I've worked with for years still have difficulty. They're not sure of themselves. I watch young men grow but still have difficulty remembering some basic powerful protocols that they're not supposed to forget.

[Mary] I think we're talking about training, like a cultural camp. Being out in nature and learning. That's pure when you take students outside. When you take young people to a camp the first day they adjust. By the second day, you notice a big difference already. Teachers are the same. The young people and teachers they are so close in the life cycle, that's why we have difficulty parenting our young people but that's why we look to our Elders. There is a teaching in that.

Importance of time in dialogue

In our culture, everyone has their say. But that's not how the meetings are held now. People have important things to say. They [the Elders] are put up there at the front to speak but there isn't much time. I noticed that change. I don't know why that is. Whether people are panicking for time but it shouldn't be that way. That's when the *oskâpêwis* or the broker, a good broker, can step in and to hold the people back if they interrupt to allow Elders the time they need to speak.

Sometimes our Elders are missed. Many of the Elders we know and we worked with, aren't around anymore. The messages that they shared, I hope, we heard and took to heart. There was time to hear and to learn their teachings. For me that is so important. Years ago, growing up, we had to sit still. We had to listen and we couldn't interrupt. That was to give the Elder time to think and to talk. That was so important. Sometimes Elders have something important to say and if you don't let them speak and they are interrupted at that time, they forget the important message they're supposed to give and get side track.

Allow for time. Years ago, I remember visiting an Elder and taking my cloth and tobacco. I had maybe only an hour or an hour and half that I could spend with him. I should have known better because I was raised different. I went from Saskatoon and drove for two and a half hours to the visit these Elders. I walked in and didn't even sit down. I stood up. I gave my cloth, my cloth and my offering. That protocol was ok but they never said a thing to me. Finally, I figured I would sit down for a while. I sat down. The Elder was sitting on the ground, he and his wife. Quite a while after, he spoke. He said, "Grandchild, I accept your tobacco and your offering, but I'm not a machine that you can turn on and I can start talking. No. The question you came for, come back in four days, then I'll answer you". What I came for, I didn't get but what I got was a very powerful teaching. I was raised that way. You don't just walk in and ask an Elder a question and expect an answer.

[It is very important] that you give the Elder time, especially when question is about something sacred or very important. You give the Elder time. You ask the Elder, "When can I come back if this is not the right time?" Now I've learned that. It is important because you will have young people out there who really want to be oskâpêwis but they only have this much [Mary indicates a small amount with her index finger and thumb] time. They need to give the Elders time. Just say,

“I can come back. Here is the tobacco. When can I come back?” Some Elders are very good, and they know people are busy, so they accommodate but they also know when you are pushy.

Training culture brokers: pre-service programs

A lot of times, [Aboriginal] teachers are qualified to share but sometimes the school they teach in is not a place to share or appropriate place to share those teachings. Even teachers, when they come out of university, how they’re taught to teach affects how they teach Aboriginal students\ youth.

There are many stories from adults who tell me about their histories, how they were afraid of the teacher because this person had authority and ruled over the classroom. They couldn’t ask questions because of the fear.

For me, I always said, in order for people to understand, when you’re teaching or sharing, you have to touch the heart of that person, the spirit of that person. Once you put that person down by telling them they’re not good enough or that they don’t qualify then you’ve killed the spirit of that person. Other people will have a hard time teaching that child whether it’s in the classroom at the elementary, high school or university level. Some people say that when I walk into the school, feeling wonderful, and then when the teacher said this..., their words killed everything I had hope for. I hear those stories. Sometimes I think we need to teach the teacher to teach from the heart not necessarily follow the way of teaching. It hasn’t worked all these years. Our kids weren’t graduating. Aboriginal kids are lowest among graduates.

Our youth like to see, touch and do. That’s why camps or outings are a way of learning for our youth. We can all learn but there are different levels of learning. Not everyone learns from a book in a desk. Some of them, even teachers, need to do that.

I would take them [, the teachers] to a culture camp. If you took [the teachers] to culture camp, you would have to make sure that there are Elders there, ready to serve the teachers. That's what it has to look like. Elders would be there to serve the teachers because they will be given tobacco to answer any questions the Elders have. This is how much I know. The teachers would be able to ask. It's not a question of who knows more. It's a question of how much do you want to know and help the young people to learn. I can't say that I know it all or know enough because I'm still learning. There are some of the Old People who I talk remind me of things that I was told a long time ago, that I had put aside; so I'm still learning. You never quit learning. No matter how much education you have, my mother used to say, you can't know it all.

We would start by introducing ceremony, tobacco teachings. The tobacco teachings are really important. A lot of our teachers have never experienced the offering of tobacco, even to Mother Earth is so important, even before we have the right to walk on that earth when we go to camp. When I take university First Nations students to camp, what I do is I put them in a circle; we all stand up, and I give each one tobacco to give to the earth themselves. What are we each going get out of that program in eight or ten days that we have out there. Each morning we have a circle and before we share, we offer tobacco for that day. For me, tobacco is a must. It is the first thing we are given as a people. Before we take medicines from the land, or ask for blessings, tobacco must come first. The offering of tobacco is to teach the teachers to be a little more humble, to be more caring, and to not take things for granted because after all there is one earth made for all of us, no matter who we are, what colour we are, what language we speak.

We didn't just know how to work with Elders; we had to learn how to work with Elders years ago. You had to learn how to look after Elders, those protocols, how to conduct yourself around Elders and what to do when you asked an Elder a question. You always had to have

tobacco. For me it's not a pouch of tobacco (that is necessary). The old people used to say you see how big the bowl is in the pipe. You need that much tobacco. That's all it was. That's all that was expected years ago. Pouch of tobacco is ok but a lot of our young teachers or our youth can't afford a pouch of tobacco. I never ask for a pouch. If someone gives me a cigarette; that's tobacco. I see it's tobacco. I don't say you bring me a pouch.

I remember my uncle used to say that we were all put in this world to share what we were given from Mother Earth. We weren't to dominate and we are to do our offering and we must give thanks every day. In order to be good culture brokers, teachers need to know those protocols to teach our Aboriginal youth because a lot of them need to learn that. They not only teach from the book but also teach the cultural protocols. All of that needs to be considered part of the school age learning that the youth must go through.

Humility

To be humble is to never say, look now, I've got all the knowledge. It's the same thing as putting up a tipi. The day that you say that you know how to do that, is the day that tipi will not go up for you in a good way because it is teaching you. You never take knowledge for granted. Even if you write it, it's worse, you may lose it [Mary starts laughing] or your computer can crash. It means that you have to try again. Ecosai. Hai. Thank-you.

APPENDIX F

Delvin Kanewiyakiho condensed transcript

I see the culture broker as a liaison. That is what I typically do in my role as an FNM consultant for GSCS [Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools]. My role is to make sure that there is both ceremony and culture in what we do. Basically, I go to the schools to set up Powwows or Round dances and if there needs to be a ceremony, then I set it up because I know the protocol to setting up. Suppose St. Michael School hosts a feast ceremony and they need someone to be the go-between or a liaison between the community and the Elder who is needed to perform or facilitate that ceremony. I do the footwork on behalf of the principal and school community to ensure that the ceremony happens in a good way and to make sure that the ceremonial person is honoured in the right way with tobacco, coloured prints, with honoraria and a gift.

I've learned this role from my father and my mother. I saw both my mother and father role-model protocol and facilitate ceremony in a good way (Tâpwê). For example, for our Cree naming ceremonies, I saw how my dad invited the Elder to our home with tobacco. He and my mother cooked up a meal for the members of the community who came to that feast. We teach through these ways of knowing that are presented through ceremony and cultural celebrations. So anything to do with prayer, meditation, ceremony, dialogue, meditation, gatherings, is all a process of Indigenous pedagogy. This is important to do this because we still have our Indigenous ways of knowing.

The qualities of a culture broker are many. I think the culture broker needs to be conscientized to the needs of the community, meaning that the culture brokers must know the community they are working with, and to respect that community by acting with spirit and intent.

A good culture broker who works with Indigenous communities certainly needs knowledge of the protocols and some knowledge of the language which fosters good relations. If someone with the intention to get help through building relationships and through trust, knows the protocols and understands how to approach Elders or Knowledge Keepers with tobacco in hand and then that individual can be a broker, Indigenous or not. Also, a cultural broker would need patience, determination, concise thinking, good communication skills, respect for other people and their culture and know how to treat a person in a dignified and honorable way. The culture broker needs passion and believes in what they are doing. They need compassion and empathy as well to understand what the Elder is going through, what help the Elder needs and so, would intuitively know the needs of that knowledge keeper when they are in that situation and to assist that Knowledge Keeper when they need help.

During the Pearson Saskatchewan Science Collaboration, I don't think that I played the role of the cultural broker. Rather, I was a Knowledge Keeper participating with other Knowledge Keepers or Elders. We were involved in the vetting of the knowledge that was going to be used within the science arena in the creation of these books, textbooks. What I saw was you, Ted, as the culture broker because you were the go-between. You travelled throughout Saskatchewan visiting these Elders and methodically presented them with tobacco and invited them to be involved in the vetting of these textbooks with respect to Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous Science. The fact that you know how to sing some of our Indigenous songs shows a cultural understanding or buy-in. I know you are Catholic but in a way you have accept our spirituality because you've taken elements of it and used in your own personal life, just the fact that you have a drum. Few Chinese people I know, drum and sing. It's something you took into your heart when we taught it to you when we worked with you at Oskayak High School. That in

itself says that you are humble and that you want to learn. I think that's another side that a broker needs in terms of his personality. Because if a culture broker is not teachable, not coachable and think that they know it all, then they will misstep and make mistakes.

You just can't go into cultural brokerage without some sort of understanding or some sort of buy-in. You have to sort of believe in the process. So, if I was an outsider coming into Saskatchewan, learning the protocols without believing in it, then it's kind of like the spirit is missing. You could go through the motions but you'd be lacking some kind of connection. You need to be connected that way in order to be a culture broker. It's more than actions. It is spiritual connection.

I think that there is no such thing [as a gradient of effectiveness for culture brokers]. I think that it is your spirit that shines through in the cultural brokerage. I think you are as effective culture broker as I would be because there is something innate in you that sees the value in what you are doing. You might not have the long hair that I do or the language that I do, but innately you know how to tread the water of culture and how to build relations between Pearson and the Elder. There is an Element of spirit, the gap in-between the processes, where the Elders understand you and you understand them and they are comfortable with you.

Oskâpêwisak would make very good culture brokers because they have many qualities. They know the language and are steeped in the culture, the knowledge and protocol. They're learners of the ceremony; and they're preparing to be the ceremonial people when their mentors have passed on. In terms of discourse, the relationships that oskâpêwisak have with the Elders facilitates giving of the teachings for the recipient. The oskâpêwis, certainly with his knowledge of ceremony and the sacred stories entail, understand the underlying thought processes in an Elder's teaching. That's very important.

In the context of Pearson, the vetting of the textbook and the dialogue that was happening, it was like a “pseudo-ceremony” but not an actual ceremony like a Sweat Lodge but it was like a ceremony because that whole process was ceremonial as knowledge was shared, from one to the other, as the dialogue was created. All the elements of the knowledge are being shared. Because in ceremony that’s what you receive, knowledge from a spiritual source. Praying, the Grandfathers talk to you through your mind, through song, because the Grandfathers talk to us, through our minds. That’s where you have to distinguish where the monkey mind [human mind] versus the spiritual mind. Every now and then when the Grandfathers speak, they put thoughts into your head. You know how you think sometimes and you stop yourself, you say to yourself, “that is not how I normally think”. When I think that is not the way I normally think, then I know that thought is a one that comes from the Old Men or the Grandfathers. That’s the way they communicate with you. The dialogue [in the PSSC] was a perfect example of Indigenous pedagogy at work because it involved prayer, song, tobacco, meditation, thinking, and gaps to think. You saw Elders talking to each other, and then a consensus was made, again Elders would talk. Someone would take a natural lead and break it down and share some knowledge in response to a western scientific topic or point. I saw many instances where the culture broker, almost like a “pseudo-oskâpêwisak”, I guess you could say, would ask for clarification and then Elders and knowledge Keepers, because of that trust process, and were able to give a lot of knowledge. Dialogue becomes spiritual, almost ceremonial.

I think teachers some understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing if they’re to be good culture brokers. So if classes were set up where pre-service teachers were given the understandings, the protocols and the learning and the background of how to deal with issues that affect Indigenous peoples in a good way before they are actually in the class room as full-service

teachers. At the college level, I know the University has policies around protocols and ways to work with Indigenous people, especially Knowledge Keepers. The next step is to do more than Native Studies 110 but to involve the university student, the pre-service teachers, in ceremony so that they understand the process. They don't have to believe in our spirituality, but they should have some knowledge and experience of it. For instance, students could be mentored and taught in a cultural camp setting or some kind of in-service day long workshop at the university. Not all pre-service teachers will buy into it. It would only those that actually view it as important and meaningful to them.

I think there is a role for teachers to be culture brokers so they can help bridge the divide between teachers and students through good relations. It's more than knowing where the kids come from. It's about walking in his shoes to understand them. It's taking that further step to have good relations in that way in being able to help a child feel safe, that they're accepted, that their cultural identity is accepted and not denied. I think many children leave their cultural identity at the door and so they put on that white mask when they come into our schools. We don't want that. We want them to be proud of who they are.